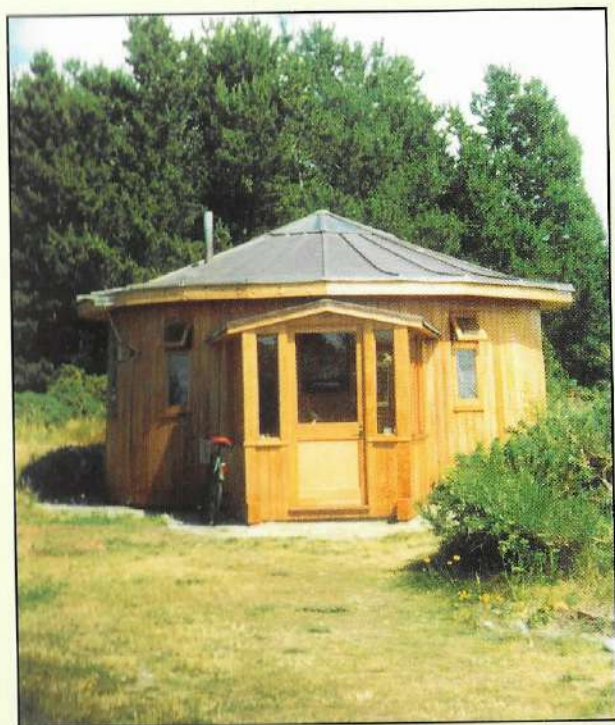


Hypocrisy and Dissent within the Findhorn Foundation

Towards a Sociology of a New Age Community



Stephen J. Castro

About the author

Stephen J. Castro was born in East London in 1954. A former Company Secretary for a central London publishing house, he has a keen interest in the sociology of New Religious Movements and the New Age counterculture. He was an Associate member of the Findhorn Foundation during the period 1989–1990, and had the opportunity to observe events at close range. For the past five years he has been a resident of Forres, Scotland, where he has continued to research events relating to the Findhorn Foundation and closely affiliated enterprises.

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For Jean



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p. 180 lines 8 and 9. The words attributed to Seneca do not appear in Robin Campbell's authoritative translation of Seneca's letters in *Letters From A Stoic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969). In that translation, Seneca says that Diogenes "curled himself up in a [earthenware] jar and went to sleep" (*ibid.*, p. 166). The story arose that Diogenes slept in a tub (thus barrel), although a large Greek earthenware jar was apparently the truth of the matter, a detail later forgotten (*ibid.*, p. 239). The barrel is therefore mythical. Diogenes was the "founder of the Cynic sect (Greek *kunikoi*, the canine or 'doggish' people . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 248).

Preface

New religious movements (sometimes more emotively known as cults)¹ have been the focus of both interest and concern to sociologists for over two decades. The term "new religious movement" (NRM) is of fairly recent coinage and, according to a Home Office publication, is "used to cover a disparate collection of organisations, most of which have emerged in their present form since the 1950's, and most of which offer some kind of answer to questions of a fundamental religious, spiritual or philosophical nature."² The majority of NRM's are said to have originated in North America (particularly California) and in the East (frequently India). Among the NRM's indigenous to the United Kingdom that are mentioned in the Home Office study is the Findhorn Foundation, situated in the north of Scotland, and described as "one of the best-known of the New Age communities in Britain."³

The present work is not intended as a history of the Findhorn Foundation. There are already a number of popular books⁴ that have sought to record and interpret various phases in the development of this New Age community. Yet it is a moot point as to whether such writings can be accepted wholly as historical fact. In the foreword to Carol Riddell's *The Findhorn Community* (1990), Mary Inglis, a Findhorn Foundation Trustee, observed: "When the idea of a new book on the Foundation surfaced a few years ago, a group of four or five long-term members got together to explore it and discovered to their astonishment that they had very different perspectives on, and interpretations of, what had happened in the past ten years, even when they had been intimately

involved with the same issues."⁵

Regarding the study of NRM's, Eileen Barker, a sociologist of religion at the London School of Economics, has written: "Social science . . . like any other descriptive science . . . is limited: it cannot decide between theological or ideological claims; it cannot pronounce moral judgements, telling people what is right or wrong; nor can it tell them what to do."⁶ Nevertheless, through an attempt at accurate description, social science can, for instance, increase social awareness of the incongruities evidenced by a particular NRM. This is the purpose of the present book. I trust that non-professionals may contribute data to this end; being in possession of a fairly substantial file on the subject of this book, I feel that it is incumbent upon me to make the details available in published form.

In the following pages I have devoted due attention to an unprecedented number of media reports and disclosures relating to the Foundation that arose during the period of 1992–1995. To these have been added a substantial amount of first-hand material confirming allegations of cult-behaviour⁷ displayed by senior staff members of this organisation towards those regarded as dissenters. The objective of the study is to provide a verifiable record of some of the incongruities evidenced by the Findhorn Foundation, an educational charitable trust (since 1972) which has described itself as "a community demonstrating a way of life in conscious co-operation with God."

In an organisation such as the Findhorn Foundation, whose members form a highly cohesive group who share the belief that the group is divinely inspired, criticism tends to be muted because it disrupts the assumed existing social reality. The members reinforce one another in believing that the group can do no wrong. This is exemplified by the fact that decisions are made at all levels, from the determining of management policy to minor kitchen operations, by a process termed "attunement." This is a rather dubious method of meditative reflection in which the individuals involved seek

to determine how they "feel" on any particular matter. The consensus result is then acted upon and subsequently considered to be "the will of God" or the will of the Universe. All management decisions, however serious, and of whatever nature, are arrived at by this methodology and thereafter are believed to be unquestionable and beyond reproach.

The documentation that is available strongly suggests that some of the social behaviour exhibited within the Findhorn Foundation can be identified as providing a classic example of the phenomenon known to social scientists as *groupthink*. Some discerned "symptoms" of groupthink have been classified by Irving Janis, as follows:

1. An illusion of invulnerability, shared by most or all the members, which creates excessive optimism and encourages taking extreme risks.
2. Collective efforts to rationalise in order to discount warnings which might lead the members to reconsider their assumptions before they recommit themselves to their past policy decisions.
3. An unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality, inclining the members to ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.
4. Stereotyped views of rivals and enemies as too evil to warrant genuine attempts to negotiate, or as too weak and stupid to counter whatever risky attempts are made to defeat their purposes.
5. Direct pressure on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments, making clear that this type of dissent is contrary to what is expected of all loyal members.
6. Self-censorship of deviations from the apparent group consensus, reflecting each member's inclination to minimise to himself the importance of his doubts and counterarguments.
7. A shared illusion of unanimity concerning judgements conforming to the majority view (partly resulting from self-

censorship of deviations, argued by the false assumption that silence means consent).

8. The emergence of self-appointed mindguards—members who protect the group from adverse information that might shatter their shared complacency about the effectiveness and morality of their decisions.⁸

This work, then, is intended as a contribution towards the sociology of the Findhorn Foundation. I hope that it will be viewed by impartial readers as a valid supplement to the literature produced by this New Age community. My intention has been to inform both sociologists and the general public of the true nature of events.

Stephen J. Castro
Forres, Scotland

November 1995

Notes

1. According to William Shaw, "Academics prefer to ignore the term cult completely, backed against the wall by a vocal anti-cult movement who have made the term their own. They use the lumpy phrase 'New Religious Movement' instead (worse, 'NRM'), a dry device which appears too broad to exclude even the Campaign to Keep Sunday Special from its umbrella, and which robs cults of their air of maverick intensity." W. Shaw, *Spying in Guru Land: Inside Britain's Cults* (London: Fourth Estate, 1994), p. xvi.
2. E. Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: HMSO, 1989), p. 9.

3. *Ibid.*, 191.
4. See for example: P. Hawken, *The Magic of Findhorn* (1975), *The Findhorn Community*, *The Findhorn Garden* (1975), E. Caddy, *The Spirit of Findhorn* (1977), *The Findhorn Community*, *Faces of Findhorn* (1980), E. Caddy, *Flight into Freedom* (1988), C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community* (1990), A. Walker, ed., *The Kingdom Within* (1994).
5. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community: Creating a Human Identity for the 21st Century*, (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1990), p. xii.
6. *New Religious Movements*, p. xi.
7. The use of the term "cult-behaviour" is not intended to denigrate the *beliefs* of the Findhorn Foundation, but rather to draw attention to *social behaviour* exhibited within this New Age community that radically departs from stated beliefs, or from the ethical and moral conduct expected from an NRM.
8. I. L. Janis, "Groupthink." Quoted in J. R. Eiser, *Social Psychology: Attitudes, Cognition and Social Behaviour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 38-39.

1. Introduction: "Instruments of the Divine"

In the early 1970's Andrew Rigby of the Department of Sociology, University of Aberdeen, wrote what was then a topical sociological study of communes and their members.¹ Among the communes he investigated was the Findhorn Community, located in the north-east of Scotland, and described as a "Centre of Light." The community had been founded on a caravan site in 1962 by Peter and Eileen Caddy, both English, and Dorothy Maclean, a Canadian.

In his study, Rigby wrote, "In Britain there are a number of religiously-inspired communes, many seeing their function in terms of social action oriented towards their wider environment, action based on their religious convictions about how social life should be ordered."² However, he considered the Findhorn Community was of a "somewhat different order" because the members were not directed by "a set of principles outlined in a book written centuries ago," but through "direct guidance of God conveyed directly to the members."³ "Thus," continued Rigby, "one of the founder members of the Centre has written: 'I must make it clear that this is a spiritual community, not a social one, in which the whole operation is under God's guidance and direction.'"⁴

According to Andrew Rigby, the *modus operandi* for "God's guidance and direction" within the community, worked as follows:

"Peter Caddy or one of the other members will have a sudden idea or hunch that something is needed for the community. This will be interpreted as the voice of God. Eileen Caddy will then be asked for a 'reading' on the matter,

to confirm it.”⁵ Once confirmation was obtained that the desired item conforms with God’s will, “the community members then feel utterly confident that their need will be satisfied, and proceed to make arrangements to obtain whatever is desired.”⁶

The alleged guidance from “God” received by Eileen Caddy was considered “the ultimate source of all authority for advice on almost any matter” within the community. Nevertheless, Andrew Rigby discerned that “the day-to-day running and organisation of the community is very much in the hands of Peter Caddy,” and “by virtue of his position as the founder of the Centre, his status as the husband of Eileen, and his undoubted organisational ability and personal charm, Peter’s authority is rarely challenged.”⁷ It is no wonder, therefore, that the period in question has been referred to as a time of “patriarchy” by current community members.

Then, in 1970 a 23 year-old American named David Spangler (sometimes spoken of as the fourth co-founder) joined the Findhorn Community for a period of three years. This charismatic young man has been described as “a great intellectual influence on the community’s development in the seventies.” We are informed that due to his influence, certain changes occurred. “The flavour of the community began to change . . . sing-songs, artistic groups, collective projects and a gentle resistance to authority” became “characteristic” of the period, and even “words like ‘democracy’ were occasionally breathed.”⁸ It is stated that “by the time he [Spangler] left, the Findhorn Foundation . . . had oriented itself towards spiritual education, and had a much more youthful personnel.” Also, Peter Caddy’s authority “had been supplemented by a leadership group.”⁹

Spangler, too, it seems, “was able to channel guidance from inwardly experienced entities . . . sources which named themselves ‘John’ and ‘Limitless Love and Truth.’”¹⁰ By August 1971, we are told that it was David Spangler’s channelled communications, and not Eileen Caddy’s “guidance,” that gained public circulation in the community’s magazine

Findhorn News. Given Spangler's increasing popularity¹¹ during that period, it is not surprising that Eileen Caddy became "unsure of her role in the community."¹²

In October 1971, Eileen Caddy records that she "was to stop receiving guidance for the community,"¹³ and that each community member would now have to find his or her own inner direction. One of the first casualties to suffer from "guidance withdrawal" appears to have been Peter Caddy himself, who, "cut off from Eileen's help . . . fell to accepting guidance from itinerant 'clairvoyants.'"¹⁴ Peter Caddy's continued reliance upon psychic messages¹⁵ was symptomatic of his long-established belief in the occult and paranormal—including, it seems, UFO's. It is said that when the Caddy's were managing Cluny Hill Hotel in Forres, Peter Caddy was given guidance that a "flying saucer crew" had indicated they could land on top of a mound behind the hotel if it was cleared of trees. Raymond Akhurst, who recounted the story, continued, "When the local press got wind of the proposed visit from outer space, Peter claimed the [subsequent] felling was to raise cash for much needed repairs to the hotel."¹⁶

Due to his on-going interest in other women, in 1979 Peter and Eileen Caddy eventually separated. We are told that he left the community "to develop himself by means of a new series of relationships."¹⁷ Commenting upon the five times married Peter, one community member recently reflected: "when it comes to all the different women he was with I still wonder, 'Was it divine or was it just human?'"¹⁸ Peter Caddy had always asserted that his relationships with women were essential to "developing the feminine part" of himself.¹⁹

The credibility of Caddy remains in question to this day; there is still a strong rumour among the Forres locals that just before he founded the Findhorn Community, Peter Caddy had been sacked for stealing money whilst managing the Trossachs Hotel in central Scotland. News of the sacking spread fast, for when the couple returned soon afterwards to Forres, Eileen Caddy recounts that she "was shunned in

the High Street in Forres by people I had known quite well.”²⁰

The third co-founder of the community, Dorothy Maclean, was said by Rigby to communicate with “archetypal forces” personified as “Devas and nature spirits,” whom she consulted during her meditations on gardening and the growth of plants. Maclean’s “co-operation” with the *Devas*, described as “architects of the plant kingdom,” was seen as proven by the community when such horticultural “miracles” as 40lb cabbages and eight-foot delphiniums began to appear. These, and other horticultural exploits, soon became “the source of the publicity which made the Findhorn Community famous,” as one member later wrote.²¹

The Findhorn Community was described by Rigby as sited on “a sandy wind-swept part of the Morayshire coastline.” Were the horticultural wonders, therefore, proof that God’s hand was at work in the new Garden of Eden? Not quite, for Lowland Moray enjoys a mild climate, and as one informed local market gardener was reported to have remarked, “Peter Caddy dug out the sand and replaced it with dung, compost and seaweed. Anyone can do that in a small plot.”²² It was also reported that the local Findhorn villagers “resent the fact that the [New Age community’s] founding father, Peter Caddy, portrayed the area, renowned for its low rainfall and high sunshine figures, as a desolate peninsula so [that] he could claim the community had achieved miracles by growing giant vegetables.”²³ (The famous miracle 40lb cabbage was actually surpassed in 1988 by Geoff Swaddle at Durham Agricultural College: he grew a 70lb cabbage without the assistance of “devic” instruction—just lots of manure!).²⁴

Andrew Rigby wrote that he encountered “recurring references to the fact that the people at Findhorn are in fact the instruments of the divine, the hands and feet of God, placed on earth to fulfil His great plan,”²⁵ a belief he felt contained distinct “adventist notions.”

“The purpose of Findhorn as a centre of light,” wrote Rigby, “is none other than that of bringing down the Kingdom of

heaven to earth by means of exemplary action. . . . Findhorn is viewed as a centre from where the forces of light will emanate to counteract the forces of darkness (i.e. materialism) throughout the world."²⁶

He concluded his study of the Findhorn Community with the statement: "Findhorn must be viewed as one of the most successful of the contemporary British communes. The members there would explain this by the fact that it is built upon a solid spiritual base and not upon the sand of mere material interest."²⁷ Yet shortly after Rigby had investigated the community, in 1972 it became officially known as the Findhorn Foundation, an educational charitable trust which spent the next decade combating the forces of materialism through the acquisition of a number of quite substantial properties. These acquisitions commenced in 1973, when the community was gifted one and a half acres adjoining the caravan park. Then, in July 1974, commenced a massive undertaking—the Universal Hall—a pentagonal building designed to seat 300 people. This was an ambitious scheme, and was not completed until nine years later in 1983, after the expenditure of some £300,000. Meanwhile, in 1975, Cluny Hill Hotel, situated in eight landscaped acres, was purchased for £60,000, and in 1978, Cullerne House along with ten acres of agricultural ground was acquired for £80,000. Also in 1978, an attractive mansion known as Drumduan House (in need of repair) was gifted to the Foundation. Another former hotel, Newbold House (which eventually became an independent charity), set in a secluded seven acres, was purchased by community members in 1979 for £80,000. A former railway station house with adjacent buildings sited in the village of Findhorn was likewise purchased by the community, and finally, the commercial caravan park that formerly leased land to the Foundation was eventually acquired for a figure said to be in the region of £400,000. The net worth of the Findhorn Foundation's properties in 1993 was quoted at £1.6 million, and the commercial turnover for the Foundation's trading arm New Findhorn Directions for the 1993 year was said

to be £1.2 million.²⁸ The fight against materialism evidently turned out to be a highly profitable crusade for the Findhorn Community. All due to "God's will," no doubt.

As for membership finances, in 1984, when the community's membership stood at approximately 170, the members savings club alone had over £100,000 invested.²⁹ In 1993, there was said to be £200,000 in the savings club, which had increased to £275,000 in 1994.³⁰

Today, we are informed that "the greater Findhorn Community consists of approximately four hundred and fifty people," and that the Findhorn Foundation as an educational charity annually "runs almost 200 week-long [fee charging] courses, as well as conferences, trainings and tours." Furthermore, that "more than 3,500 people from 38 different countries participated in courses or events during 1994." As far as tourism is concerned, it is estimated that "more than 8,000 people visit the Findhorn Foundation during a typical year." On the commercial side, New Findhorn Directions Ltd, a "subsidiary of the Findhorn Foundation that operates a variety of businesses," was said to include: Appropriate Energy Systems Ltd, the Phoenix Shop, the Wind Park, Findhorn Bay Caravan Park, a holiday park, the Helios Café, and Gnosis, a rather dramatic title applied to a computer software and consulting company.³¹ In addition to the above, there is the recently formed commercial enterprise known as Ecological Village Findhorn Limited, which plans "to develop between 25 and 30 two-storey flats on a five-acre plot adjacent to the main Foundation land . . ."³²

Amazingly, twenty years on, "adventist" notions still linger in the community, as evidenced in a document obtained in 1994, which quite openly declared: "The Findhorn Foundation is a community demonstrating a way of life in conscious co-operation with God."³³ Such a description of elite prerogative is contradicted in another document of this community, which clearly seeks to justify the mood of disillusionment with which visitors to the Foundation are often afflicted. A very recent message from the current Director

of the Foundation observes that visitors to the community expecting "some perfect place, a magical mystical spot with fairies and nature spirits cavorting under every tree . . . find a caravan park with people who appear pretty ordinary, doing pretty ordinary things."³⁴ The Director, Judy Buhler-McAllister (a Canadian), further informs that "parents can sometimes be heard yelling at the kids, lovers can be seen spatting, some folk look tired, some are clearly less than radiantly healthy and not all the gardens are worthy of being put on a postcard to be sent home to mom, dad or the kids."³⁵ The discrepancy with the ideal formerly advertised is acute indeed, but the implications have not yet been drawn by the staff personnel. Instead, Judy Buhler-McAllister writes in an apologetic vein: "the removal of our illusions is what frees us up to engage with what is actually here. . . . we engage with the extraordinary task of learning to love one another—warts and all."³⁶ At this point the reader may ask if such an assessment of the current situation at the Foundation is valid. Careful investigation of the facts available has led critics to conclude that illusions have not been removed and that talk about love amounts to doubletalk under the conditions imposed by the Foundation staff.

2. "Findhorn in 'takeover' scare"

*Always there is a black spot in our
sunshine: it is the shadow of ourselves.*
Thomas Carlyle

"Centres of light . . . will always cast their shadows. Life at the Findhorn Community is not always roses-in-the-snow on a pretty postcard—look closer and you will find the thorns."³⁷

That candid observation, written by a former member of the Findhorn Community, was in reference to the "unprecedented attacks on the credibility and intentions of Foundation members"³⁸ that erupted in the summer of 1992, the year the Foundation was to celebrate its 30th Anniversary. During that eventful summer the Findhorn Foundation, a charitable educational trust, was on the receiving end of the worst media exposé ever in its history as the leading flagship of the New Age movement in Britain.

In early July of that year, residents of the small and picturesque conservation village of Findhorn on the north east coast of Scotland were reported to have been "thrown into turmoil" by a document leaked to the local press from the neighbouring New Age community. "It is dynamite," exclaimed Findhorn village resident Bill Shand, "the Findhorn Foundation is going to try to take over the entire peninsula for its own uses, and the village is part of that overall plan."³⁹

"This paper is clear evidence of what the villagers of Findhorn have long expected," commented fellow villager Sir Michael Joughin. "It also seems that they [the Foundation] seek public funds from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to

aid their purposes.”⁴⁰

Grampian regional councillor Robbie Laing also added his voice to the concerns of the villagers, stating that he was perturbed by the spectacle of a New Age community applying for public funds “for the acquisition of power and wealth and to further their own interests.”

“I would look very closely, if I were Highlands and Islands Enterprise, at any application coming from this charitable organisation, to establish whether or not it was soundly based and whether or not the money is used for the benefit of the wider community,” said Councillor Laing.⁴¹

The confidential internal memorandum outlined financially ambitious plans for a £5 million share flotation, to create a public limited company (Findhorn Business Partners plc) with the aim of expanding the Findhorn Foundation and its commercial operations.

The memo, marked for the attention of Foundation members only, contained a draft prospectus earmarking £1.4 million “to acquire additional land in Findhorn” before Autumn 1993, and a further £1.25 million “to provide loan finance for the purchase of residential accommodation.”⁴²

Self-described former “hard-nosed businessman”⁴³ Mr. Johnny Brierley, an associate of the Foundation who had helped draft the share flotation scheme, said that the idea behind the plan was to create a sustainable “planetary village.” He added, “until we have a sustainable economy, we can’t offer ourselves as a role model or an alternative to the existing global system.”⁴⁴

Yet despite the Foundation’s pretensions to becoming an alternative to the existing global economic system, its former Trading Centre had actually made a loss of £130,000 the previous year through “an ambitious advertising campaign.” Further, “last year’s losses were inflated by an extra print run of thousands of diaries and calendars, most of which, having languished for months in a Glasgow warehouse, had to be shredded.”⁴⁵

Asked to comment on the Foundation’s financial incom-

petence, Hydro-Electric company chairman Sir Michael Joughin remarked: "If members of the New Age community had spent more time in the world 'as it is' rather than as they want it to be, they would not have lost large sums of money on their economic activity."⁴⁶

(It was later to be publicised: "For the year ended January 1993, the published report and accounts, highlighted in a recent BBC TV news report, show the Foundation recorded a meagre profit of £471 on a turnover of £1 million." The Foundation's trading arm, New Findhorn Directions, showed a rather insubstantial profit of "£40,000 on a turnover of £1.2 million" for the same period).⁴⁷

News of the "takeover" broke whilst stunned residents of the village of Findhorn were still trying to digest the full implications of a proposed £500,000 fee-charging holistic health centre to be built in the grounds of Minton House, "an elegant pink mansion set in seven acres of grounds right on the shoreline of Findhorn Bay."⁴⁸ That property, situated opposite Foundation-owned Cullerne House, has been described as "the jewel of Findhorn."⁴⁹

This entrepreneurial scheme was devised by Minton House owner Judith Meynell and German GP Cornelia Fellner. The latter ran "health care provision" for members of the Findhorn Foundation, and had previously obtained £70,000 in donations⁵⁰ for a less ambitious holistic health centre named "Meridian." Donations that were used to purchase a newly built designated residential property situated within Foundation precincts. It was later reported by the local press that Dr. Fellner and her associates had overlooked the necessity to obtain permission from the local authorities to use the property ("Meridian") for business purposes.⁵¹

Judith Meynell, the owner of Minton House, had for five years run it as a private business where, according to her promotional brochure, "spiritual values and practice are fully integrated."⁵² She stood to make £50,000 from the sale of the plot of land required for the proposed centre, and there was a further proposition for Minton House to host a poten-

tially lucrative "ongoing educational programme," designed to include: "holistic health courses, business workshops, spiritual education, and personal and organisational transformation."⁵³

Minton House, at this time (1992), was already advertising a series of six-day courses with the overall descriptive title, *The Spirit of Business: Working Retreats for Tomorrow's Business Leaders*, and with an individual course price range of £350-£750 "according to whether an individual is paying privately or being sponsored by their business . . ." Potential clients in search of "spiritual values" were further informed: "We expect companies to pay the top range, acknowledging the benefit of what their employee brings back from the course."⁵⁴

Local GPs initially gave a "cautious welcome" to the plans for a holistic health centre. Dr. R. J. Stewart of the NHS Forres Health Centre was reported as saying: "As long as it is kept properly run, and has properly registered and qualified people running it, yes—I do welcome the idea." He reiterated, "providing that therapists are properly accredited and continue to take proper training."⁵⁵

Another Forres GP, Dr. James Anderson, said that he would "keep an open mind" and wait and see what Dr. Cornelia Fellner had to offer.⁵⁶

What did Dr. Cornelia Fellner have to offer? As the coordinator for the various fee-charging holistic health programmes within the Foundation, Dr. Fellner offered, for example: "Exploring Neuro-Linguistic programming," "Shiatsu," "A Course in Miracles," "Reiki," "Californian massage," "Sexuality and Safer Sex in the New Age," and many other non-conventional therapies and New Age health anomalies.⁵⁷ Let us take a brief look at one of the therapies in question, namely, Reiki.

According to the authors of a popular book on Reiki,⁵⁸ the word means "universal life energy," and is defined by its practitioners as being a "power which acts and lives in all created matter."⁵⁹ We are informed that the practice of Reiki

"isn't difficult to learn" and that "special medical knowledge isn't necessary either, for the universal energy of Reiki possesses a wisdom of its own and functions of its own accord."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, should this simplistic hands-on healing technique fail to work on patients, it is because, we are told, "in their innermost beings such patients, consciously or unconsciously, do not want to be healthy again."⁶¹

Practitioners of Reiki consider themselves to be "channels" for this universal life energy, a rather dubious privilege for which they are quite evidently prepared to pay vast sums. An article on Reiki in the glossy New Age magazine, *Kindred Spirit*, had noted that: "One particular criticism that has been voiced about Reiki is the price of the training. Although the First Degree compares favourably with other courses, the Degrees get progressively more expensive. The Master/Teacher course costs several thousand pounds."⁶²

"Training" is perhaps an inappropriate word, as "Reiki is not taught like other methods of medicine or healing," but consists of "initiation ceremonies" and "attunements"—administered for a fee by a "Reiki Master," through which means, it is alleged, "an inner healing channel will be opened up within you to attune you to the flow of Reiki energy."⁶³

These "initiations" take just a weekend to complete, and the stated fee in an advertisement offering the first two levels of initiation (Reiki Level I and Reiki Level II) was £155 and £185 respectively.⁶⁴ However, to receive the coveted title of "Reiki Master/Teacher" can indeed be a more expensive undertaking. One entrepreneur, "International Reiki Master" Simon Treselyan, has offered "a special Reiki master-class" entitled "Masters in Paradise" at the exotic location of Bali, and for the fully inclusive cost of £2,222 per person.⁶⁵ A figure that, to critics, seems a rather excessive fee for something said to be universal in nature, requiring no special medical knowledge, and which can be learnt in just a weekend.

The justification for such exorbitant sums has been stated concisely by "Reiki Master" Tammaya Honervogt, who says: "It stops people doing it casually and calling themselves a

Master/Teacher without having the insight on what they have received. It has to be an exchange of energy, and nowadays that's money."⁶⁶

The practice of holistic health within the Findhorn Foundation was not without accompanying social problems. In May 1991 Dr. Fellner was obliged to report that there was an incident where a guest of the Foundation "felt violated during a massage given in Holistic Health Department facilities." Dr. Fellner commented: "It is crucial that a practitioner is very clear with his/her client especially when massaging areas such as breasts and buttocks. To ask permission is obligatory when the client is a guest (it is also quite good if it's somebody from here—assumptions can sometimes be wrong). *Standards in 'mainstream' society are very different from some of ours!* Also, I can't emphasise enough how important it is to be conscious of the state of the practitioner's second chakra during this kind of healing work" (italics mine).⁶⁷

The above report conceded the necessity for implementation of a "Code of Ethics and Practice," but the difference in "standards" between mainstream society and the Findhorn Foundation was not enlarged upon. As to the meaning of Dr. Fellner's somewhat enigmatic reference to the "second chakra," according to Ruth White, a New Age therapist and writer, the second (or sacral) chakra "relates directly to the act of sex."⁶⁸

It therefore did not come as much of a surprise to observers when all ten General Practitioners from the Forres Health Centre wrote to a local newspaper saying they would have nothing to do with Dr. Fellner's "holistic health" proposal (see chapter 6, pp. 87–88).

3. "New Age narcissism"

Quite unexpectedly, in the midst of the heated conflict between the Findhorn villagers and the Foundation, a thunderflash was thrown. Unbeknown to both parties a book had been published that summer, namely *The Destiny Challenge*,⁶⁹ containing a controversial chapter on the Findhorn Foundation. The message of chapter 14 was clear enough: "The New Age is a sham and not what it pretends to be."⁷⁰

In her critical assessment of the New Age, author Kate Thomas had observed: "Far from constituting any kind of imminent 'Golden Age,' the so-called New Age is buttressing an extended dark age of very serious proportions . . . and takes to an even worse extreme the rabid economic and sensual materialism of the twentieth century . . . It has settled for secondary values that yield prestige, power, and a comfortable lifestyle" and is "concerned increasingly with assertiveness training, self-esteem, [and] sexual fulfillment . . .

"No wonder that sociologists have described the New Age movement in terms of narcissism,"⁷¹ she concluded.

In her autobiographical book, Thomas recounts in a 100 page chapter her two-year association with the Findhorn Foundation as a participant/observer. Though described by the local press as "an attack that goes to the heart of the Foundation's programme of spiritual education and its status as the leading New Age community in Britain,"⁷² she said that the purpose of her findings was not to launch an attack, but to provoke debate. "I think they need to ask a lot of questions, and they need to get answers."⁷³

The Foundation, however, was not interested in debate,

and certainly not in questions and answers. "We will be sending it off to our lawyers for legal advice,"⁷⁴ was the response of Caroline Baylis, general secretary to the Findhorn Foundation. It was later confirmed by Tods Murray, the Foundation's solicitors in Edinburgh, that they had been consulted "on the matter of defamation."⁷⁵

Meanwhile, in an attempt to publicly underrate the controversial findings of Thomas's book, Alex Walker, a Foundation spokesman and Trustee, made the following brief statement to the local press:

"Regarding the recent publication of a book by Kate Thomas, we should like to make it plain that she is not and never has been a member of the Findhorn Foundation."⁷⁶

A riposte from the pen of Thomas appeared the following week in the letters column of the *Forres Gazette*:

"With regard to the comment made by Alex Walker in relation to myself in your recent front page article on my book, *The Destiny Challenge*, I would like to suggest that Mr. Walker checks his facts before making statements.

"I was indeed a member of the Findhorn Foundation, being an Associate member for one full year (1989/1990) while residing in Findhorn village, and visited the Foundation almost daily. Furthermore, I spent ten weeks in addition to this period in residence at Cluny Hill College—I therefore had ample opportunities for accurate observation.

"I would suggest that Alex Walker and other staff members actually read *The Destiny Challenge* to see what I am saying before passing judgements and crying 'Wolf.' The fact that the Foundation can send to a solicitor an unread book does not increase my admiration for them—I understand the book was hastily despatched with some paragraphs in Chapter 14 marked in red, and with the intention of having it suspended from circulation . . ."⁷⁷ There was no reply from Mr. Walker, and nor any other Foundation spokesperson.

In her book, Kate Thomas has described the New Age movement in terms of "narcissism," which she defined as "an uncurbed egotism and self-love that is so adverse to

(constructive) criticism that it will actively suppress a non-hostile critic in the most undemocratic manner . . .”⁷⁸ Her definition does seem appropriate.

Despite the knee-jerk reaction from the Foundation to silence Kate Thomas, three weeks on, no interdict against the book had been lodged,⁷⁹ doubtless because the content was too factual and well substantiated to merit any legal action. An announcement by a supporter of Thomas appeared in the letters page of the *Forres Gazette* to inform readers that “the book is sold by booksellers in various parts of the United Kingdom without ‘let or hindrance.’”⁸⁰

The Destiny Challenge was not the only book to appear in 1992 that contained a critique of the Findhorn Foundation. The “radical Goddess feminist and artist” Monica Sjöö, writing from an entirely different perspective to that of Kate Thomas (who is not a feminist), had included a chapter on the Foundation in her work *New Age and Armageddon*.⁸¹ Sjöö had noted that despite the Findhorn Community’s “modest beginnings in a caravan park by the sea near Forres . . . by 1987 Findhorn had grown into a thriving spiritual community. Today it owns a number of large buildings, such as Cluny Hill hotel (now a college), and it has been granted custodianship of the Isle of Erraid off the west coast of Scotland. It is wealthy. It runs expensive courses and conferences. The majority of its members are white, middle class and well-off. Many come from north America.”⁸²

In her book, Monica Sjöö referred to a 1984 article by Daphne Francis, first published in the Feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, and entitled: “Is New Age spirituality offering anything really new to women? Reflections of a New Age survivor.”⁸³ I obtained a copy of that critical article.

Daphne Francis was a resident member of the Foundation from 1980 to 1983, and is one of those individuals missing from the popular Foundation records. She was able to observe the lack of wider social concern evidenced by the community she deemed parochial:

“There was a real lack of concern for social issues at

Findhorn which I felt reflected a narrow selfish concern for the welfare of the Community itself and perhaps accounts for its lack of credibility with the local Scots population. Guided by the pragmatic philosophy 'actions speak louder than words,' most locals are not taken in by the Community's fine-sounding verbal stances.

"In fact, the Community does see itself as a centre for demonstrating 'New Age' practice as a model for the future . . . If everybody lived like us, so the theory goes, there would be no social problems. . . . What is being modelled, however, is a group of privileged upper-middle class white people living together—not very relevant for the mass of the population of the world."

Significantly perhaps, Daphne Francis is a Scot who was reared in Aberlour, only some 20 miles from Findhorn. She gained an M.A. in Economics and Politics from St. Andrew's University, and later joined the Foundation at the age of thirty-five after "actively exploring [her] spirituality for several years." Following the publication of *The Destiny Challenge*, Francis wrote a friendly letter to Kate Thomas in which she commented upon her stay in the Foundation:

"I found living at the Foundation so alienating that eventually I left (along with other 'dissidents') . . . I found my time there very mind-bending and soul-destroying. I had just had my second child and was vulnerable there as a mother.

"I found that if I ever spoke out on the behaviour of people in power there on certain issues, the usual 'doublespeak' was used against me—I was dubbed 'judgemental,' 'stuck in a victim pattern,' or 'very negative' . . . I have found it very healing to be able to share with others who can speak out on the issues around the Findhorn Foundation, particularly those who can speak from experience and who challenge what is marketed as spirituality there. Some critiques I have read are written by those who fear the psychic side of life, or by others who speak from a traditional religious viewpoint. I am particularly interested in talking to those others whose critiques stem from a desire to create a genuinely new

spirituality that offers a real way forward, rather than the amoral cul-de-sac which the Findhorn Foundation offers.”⁸⁴

More recently, Kate Thomas stated in a letter dated 28th October 1995: “Some observers have noted that the Findhorn Community is no longer following its formerly advertised aims, and that its orientation ‘changed about three years ago when Foundation management moved towards a more commercial basis’ (to quote from a recent interview given by David Morgan, the editor of the *Forres Gazette*, to *One Earth* magazine, Issue No. 19, Autumn 1995, p. 16), although I believe this shift toward capitalism was already entrenched at a much earlier date. I also believe that the Findhorn Foundation *could* have been, under different circumstances, a beacon of light in a troubled world. It *could* have demonstrated all that is best in human endeavour, values and integrity, whilst establishing a valid prototype for the next century in the form of a self-supporting community of hardworking people geared to a new way of life, and aspiring to the highest potential within humankind.

“These possibilities were blocked, and often ruthlessly, by self-seeking persons in positions of authority who initiated the very antithesis of what was required—persons who are fast making this community into a mirror-reflection of all other commercial and ego-oriented business organisations.

“In my view this is nothing short of tragic, and a very real betrayal of all those people who sent their hard earned donations through the years to fund an “evolutionary spear-head”—not just an extremely gratifying lifestyle for an all-powerful and elite few.”

4. "Book in 'sham' blast at Foundation"

Critical assessment is anathema to the New Age, a fact noted by John Rowan, a consultant psychologist, who has commented that "the general attitude of the New Age seems to be indiscriminating, and even to be against the whole idea of discrimination."⁸⁵ Rowan further observed that when confronted with factual information that challenges cherished beliefs, "the average New Age person reacts by simply not wanting to talk to you any more—you have the wrong attitude and possibly the wrong vibrations."⁸⁶

Kate Thomas was ostracised by the members of the New Age community she had dared to question, and her book in turn shunned by those who believed it too dissentient to even be read. Yet despite obstructive attempts at censorship, her critique of the Findhorn Foundation remains an important contribution to a long overdue critical assessment of the New Age counterculture. It is these "heretical" observations which will provide some necessary background for the understanding of further events to be recounted in the present work, and I am therefore most grateful to Kate Thomas for permission to include the following much abridged version of her critical chapter, edited and adapted by me for easier reading, and with the addition of further relevant material.

A New Age Community: Observation and Dissent

(What follows is the Kate Thomas report with additions):
Although I had so far encountered fairly numerous "New Age"

organisations, I had not yet been to the largest one in the U.K., namely the Findhorn Foundation in the far north of Scotland, founded in 1962 by Eileen and Peter Caddy and Dorothy Maclean. It was certainly the most publicised, and had the repute of being the leading communal "spiritual centre" in Britain. Some of the partisans said that it was more important than any in America, and that it exerted a more spiritual influence than any of the American counterparts.

I knew that I would have to personally investigate the Findhorn Foundation before coming to any concrete conclusion with regard to this Community. Clearly, this well-established organisation had to be reckoned with if one was to take the New Age movement at all seriously. In March 1988, therefore, after finishing the first full draft of Chapters 1-13 of *The Destiny Challenge* (containing the greater part of my spiritual and observational experience), I decided to visit the Findhorn Foundation.

Apart from hearsay, my information concerning the Foundation was mostly derived from reading their magazine, *One Earth*, over a number of years. It seemed of late to be reflecting less and less of an emphasis upon spirituality and more and more of a therapy context. Nevertheless, the clearly expressed belief of the Foundation was that it is the spearhead of the New Age movement, and in the forefront of planetary changes that were preparatory to the "leap in consciousness" humanity must take. This organisation also described itself very firmly as a spiritual community.

When I arrived at the Foundation in mid-March 1988, I stayed at its major site known as the Park, close to the village of Findhorn. On later visits, with one exception, I was accommodated in Cluny Hill College (a former eighty-bedroom hotel) in the nearby "floral" town of Forres. I was interested to find that it was commonly believed by the members that nobody went there by chance. Was this a commercial sentiment, or was it a genuine attitude of unbiased tolerance? On closer investigation, this belief more precisely applied to

people who became resident staff members, or who came to live in the area. These people comprised only a bare minority amongst the four thousand or so visitors who poured through the Foundation every year, usually for commercial programmes lasting one week, two weeks, or a month, with the addition of bi-annual Conferences.

There was a large communal membership of over a hundred residents, and a similar, rapidly expanding number of Associate and Open Community members who lived in the area. The predominant nationality of the membership was American, though Germans and other European nationalities were much in evidence. There were comparatively few English people, and even fewer Scots, amongst them. Women members were well in the majority, and the principal age group was approximately twenty-five to forty-five years. The Director, Craig Gibsone, was an Australian and had been resident for the greater part of an eighteen year period, during the earlier years of which he had focalised the community in Peter Caddy's frequent absences. He was now two years into his self-set term of Directorship, a period he "intuited" as five years. There had been several Directors before him. I gathered that many disagreements had arisen, and numerous problems, both economic and social, were encountered during the various terms of office.

In my earliest discussions with members, several of them assured me that the Foundation had begun to attract persons of a more serious disposition than formerly, persons who were obviously in search of "inner growth" and were clearly aware of their own need for guidance. This influx of genuine aspirants, they said, was in response to the more specific slant of their current literature, which included their magazine *One Earth*, the latter containing many reprinted articles and selected quotations from the writings of scientists and revolutionary thinkers who were making important discoveries in the fields of ecology, physics, and psychology. The statements about aspirants sounded promising, but I could not help noticing that there was very little science evident

in the actual life of the community. The revolutionary thinkers were not resident at the Foundation, and I began to suspect that professional scientists would not have felt entirely comfortable with the rather casual attitudes often discernible. Yet on a purely manual level, some ecologically sound work had been accomplished by some members. Only recently, it seemed, had they been able to start on the projected "planetary village" which had been anticipated for many years, and which Eileen Caddy had predicted in 1969 would grow "into a town and finally into a vast city of Light."

The environmental potential for an ecological village was substantial, and the Foundation-owned property impressive. Scenically situated near Findhorn Bay, the main centre (The Park) was spread over a number of acres, and included a holiday caravan site. Visitors enthused over the scenery—despite the drawback of the NATO airbase close by. Cullerne House, situated a little further along the road on the Findhorn village side, is set in extensive grounds complete with well-stocked vegetable and flower gardens, where most guests opt to work if they get the opportunity. Its excellent accommodation is used to house members, and a large, handsome ground-floor room is utilised for courses. Station House, in the village of Findhorn itself, is a quaint and sprawling property surrounding a pretty courtyard and, again, specifically for members. There were also properties in Forres, three large and imposing mansions each set in their own grounds—Newbold House, Drumduan House (which was in process of being re-leased to the Rudolf Steiner organisation for use as a Steiner school), and Cluny Hill College.

The educational aspect of the Foundation continued to puzzle me. It became clear that Cluny Hill College was a College of alternative therapy, and that it differed from more conventional colleges in removing the factor of analysis in favour of an outright enthusiast approach to every commercial therapy promoted by the Foundation. If one dared to criticise any feature of the fee-charging courses or "work-

shops" in occurrence, one was promptly informed that the problem lay in one's own psychological projections. This placed any protest at an immediate disadvantage, and focalisers (members facilitating the courses) were quite inflexible on this point.

I seemed to have got off to a bad start with my rather questioning disposition in such matters. Yet the urge to continue persisted. This place was clearly regarded as the central hub of the whole New Age movement in the West; there was no doubt that it was widely considered to set the tone for whatever that movement initiated at the present time. It had definite links with a worldwide network of centres, including the influential Esalen Institute in California. I had ascertained that Foundation members were invited to instruct other smaller New Age organisations and were held in high regard by those in similar fields of therapy and counselling. I felt that I should make a more thorough investigation, leaving no stone unturned, and suspend any criticism.

From March to the end of August my attention was therefore almost exclusively focused upon this prominent New Age centre, and nearly half of that time was spent in residence within the community. During this period I entered fully into the life of a student, this being the only way to remain there indefinitely. I attended three separate courses tutored by resident staff, and involved myself with guests and members, experiencing every facet of community living; working in homecare, kitchens and gardens, and immersing myself generally in all aspects of the New Age phenomenon.

I met many religious seekers and aspirants while I lived within the community. They were drawn from all parts of the Western world in search of tuition and growth, and I noted their increasing perplexity in the face of the non-traditional techniques to which they were subjected throughout the coursework. Many, of course, responded with great enthusiasm to these techniques and doubtless gave glowing reports on their return home which caused others

to come and try them for themselves. But the more sensitive of their number with whom I talked were distressed, even shocked, by some of the things they had encountered, and left with much disillusionment and in states that were definitely not to their advantage.

The commercial courses certainly provide emotional release, and are frequently exhilarating and great fun—if this is what you are seeking—for the whole ethos is overtly therapeutic in context and may even be useful if you are someone in need of basic psychotherapy. But if you wish to seriously develop your understanding of what constitutes an authentic spiritual life, then the Findhorn Foundation can take you nowhere, though this it seriously purports to do. Its focalisers (course leaders), in general, are without sufficient knowledge and experience, and are also sadly lacking in sensitivity.

My own feelings about this situation were very clear-cut. I had gone there as an observer and also as a participant, and soon realised that much that went on was done in ignorance or in the misguided belief that it was legitimate. The Foundation was influenced by many speakers regarded as teachers and spiritual guides, whose ideas and *modus operandi* were utilised and incorporated in the general courses run by members; and many members brought in exercises and techniques from elsewhere and used them because they actually “worked,” meaning they produced an emotional effect. How, and why, and what the end results would be, did not concern them. The techniques were effective for the time their courses lasted, and this was seemingly enough.

There is no screening of applicants at Cluny Hill College, the Foundation’s main venue for its educational programmes, although all must take an “Experience week” before attending any courses. In my “week,” the group consisted mainly of Americans, and included five persons “drying out” from the very recent effects of alcoholism and drugs, all of whom had psychological problems, and one of whom had twice been admitted to a psychiatric hospital by her own admission. With

these disordered people the rest of us were closely enmeshed through "attunements" and meditations, plus the use of numerous techniques and exercises designed to bond any grouping of widely differing personality types. When I protested to the two focalisers (group leaders) in charge (Cally Miller-Simpson and Dianne Falasca) that the effects of these disturbed people on myself caused me to feel ill and devitalised, I was firmly and unsympathetically put in my place. The problem was mine—within *me*, and for *me* to deal with. It was recognised that I was *not* a bad mixer, nor making criticisms of my fellow students, with all of whom I was on good terms. It was simply *not understood* that psychological disturbances can transmit in such collective situations through the attunements and "sharings" (open discussions) that took place with monotonous regularity. During the sharings, personal case histories of the more lurid kind were frequently elicited, and the more extroverted participants soon found this a useful way to gain everyone's attention and the encouragement of the focaliser, as everything stopped for this.

The mixture of deliberately heightened awareness (via the many meditations) and the emotional release operative in "sharings," can be a disastrous experience for the more sensitive. I was told that the many small dramas I witnessed were nothing to what *could* happen. A guest had been known to run amok at night and rush, stark naked, along the corridors of Cluny Hill College screaming with unleashed emotion. Another guest committed arson in both the sanctuary and the dining room. It was common knowledge among Foundation staff that around Wednesday of any Experience week, *anything* might happen.

Later, I learned that I had been effectively blacklisted through my protests and labelled as "difficult" and not desirable as a group participant. To this was subsequently added the results of exchanges with other focalisers, none of whom were concerned with the possible truth of what was said. The concern of these focalisers was primarily the successful completion of the current course which guaran-

teed an ongoing income for the community in general and some individuals in particular. If people were satisfied, others would come through their recommendations, and those who were "difficult" like myself, were readily dispensable.

And others *were* "difficult." While I was in residence, guests for various reasons refused to continue with what they had come for, and were despatched home quietly with a refund. Dissatisfied members left, and stated why; and both members and visitors sent in critical letters which were suppressed. One such letter was pinned to the noticeboard for about fifteen minutes—only long enough for myself and the staff member who took it down, to read it. It was from a lady in her early sixties who had used her life savings to come to the Foundation, but who was genuinely distressed by the sexual attitudes of several focalisers and the sexually explicit material used for one of their talks. She did not feel this to be necessary or in keeping with the dissemination of spiritual values—the world outside was quite bad enough, and she had not expected to find the same thing *here*.

The sexual attitudes within the Foundation were not my prime consideration, but the use of neo-Reichian and other techniques, including those appropriated, regardless of the religious and cultural context, from Buddhist, Hindu, and shamanistic traditions, were for me a matter of grave concern. Many of these latter had been adapted by fringe therapists and incorporated into modern psychotherapeutic practice *because they produce effects*. Through this means such techniques have come to the attention of persons attending weekend or longer courses in London and elsewhere, and are swiftly appropriated by would-be therapists and experimenting teachers and absorbed into the curriculums of other New Age ventures. The impact of these techniques is not in dispute, but the lack of knowledge of what they initiate, and their long-term effects allied to a total lack of control of any consequence, should be of major concern to all those exposed to them, and also, of course, to professional psychologists.

A case in point occurred during the Youth Project fortnight held while I was at the Foundation. One sixteen year old girl told the youthful focalisers soon after her arrival that she had slashed her own limbs with a razor blade under stress, which clearly indicated that she had a problem. They decided she "needed love" and let her stay, and then exposed her to the full range of Findhorn "Experience week" techniques, the result being that two persons stayed up all one night to prevent the girl from further damaging herself (having first called in a doctor) and returned her to her home the next day accompanied by two senior members of staff who did not leave her on her own for one minute, so serious was the situation. Human error can occur in any profession and is a sad fact of life, and in this case the intention to help was certainly present, but here we have youthful, undiscerning, and unqualified people in charge of unscreened and very young applicants, administering techniques expressly designed to open up the emotions and affect the psyche, which proved too much for this particular individual. The girl's roommate, the highly intelligent daughter of two Canadian psychologists, told me how greatly she had been distressed by what she realised was inexperience and insufficiently attentive attitudes. This had spoilt the entire fortnight as far as she was concerned, and the needless shock she experienced will linger long in her mind.

I have myself witnessed several persons wandering around Cluny Hill College during various courses who were obviously suffering mental abnormalities (observed also, to my knowledge, by more than one focaliser), but who were nevertheless permitted to participate in closely-knit group-work for a one to two week period, taking part in the frequent daily attunements and the regular meditations.

One of the incidents that blocked my possibility of obtaining Full membership occurred during a meeting of the large "Living in Community" (LCG) group, and arose when the focaliser sponsored an amateur attempt at psychotherapy. A Norwegian youth who showed signs of disturbance, was

actively pressurised by an American university student (female) to pummel a cushion and release his impacted emotions of anger and frustration. He did not wish to do this because of the strength of his own feelings, of which he was clearly afraid, and also because of his obvious uncertainty regarding the girl's ability to assist him. I tried to prevent the exercise as I did not agree with her diagnosis and nor the way she enforced her viewpoint. The male focaliser ignored my efforts to intervene and allowed the girl to have her head, perhaps because she was very attractive and persuasive. When induced to proceed, the Norwegian unleashed a torrent of rage into the room which affected many others in the group, who rapidly lost their formerly defined personalities and urged him on with the primitive fervour of a mindless mob. The focaliser could not control their behaviour, and I felt so appalled (and sick) that I left the room. The young Norwegian said later that apart from a brief feeling of release, the frenzied outburst had not in any way removed his problem. [According to Ivan Tyrrell, the editor of *The Therapist*, the journal of the European Therapy Studies Institute, "there are more than 400 published studies that show quite clearly that when people are focused in this way, they just become more angry—not better"]. This exercise in gestalt psychotherapy I consider to be amateur bungling that could have unpredictable and undesirable results in unstable persons. No-one present had any qualification to conduct an emotional catharsis, nor did they have any idea of the root cause of this person's state of conflict.

I was afterwards severely censured for my departure from the scene by the focaliser, Alec Whittam (a senior staff member relieving the regular focaliser, who was unable to be present). This man felt embarrassed by the incident and said he considered me a disruptive influence and that "no focaliser would want you in their group." He added his viewpoint to that of the regular focaliser, Charles Peterson, whose entire group had "sent me to Coventry" on the first afternoon of my attendance for asking what being an LCG

(Living in Community Guest) entailed and how meaningful (in a spiritual sense) it was for each of the participants—a question which delayed the consensus desire to play games (quite literally) outside in the sunshine. I asked this because I had not, as yet, encountered the demonstration of “a conscious connection with Spirit,” or sampled an “in-depth experience of a Centre dedicated to planetary transformation,” as advertised for this programme. My question was not answered by Mr. Peterson, whose foremost concern at the time was circle dancing and accommodating the holiday wishes of those in his charge.

Early in my contact with the Foundation, I met the co-founder, Eileen Caddy, on whose “inspirational” messages and visions the venture subsists. She allowed me a quite lengthy interview that left me feeling perplexed, for her principal preoccupation was her former husband’s recent remarriage (for the fifth time) and the pain he (Peter) had caused her. She was also distressed by a recent letter he had sent her, the controversial content of which she required me to promise not to disclose to anyone. Nevertheless, we parted as friends, and she later wrote to me: “I so enjoyed our time together. . . . It was such a joy to find someone I could talk to who could understand what I was talking about.”

Eileen Caddy teaches that one is *already* a Christ-filled being and that affirmations of this condition are *all that is necessary* for interior development. One should “love oneself” with all one’s faults and accept oneself just as one is. Self-examination is not a requirement, and the correction of personality flaws is never mentioned. Everything is up to the individual. Whatever unpleasantness is meted out by another is considered a projection of one’s own problems and can only be countered within oneself, by changed attitudes—which ensures that none are rebuked and very little is altered. She furthermore makes clear that we need no teacher, and will take no responsibility for those who accept her dictums; the way must be found by oneself through attention to the inner voice. (This “inner voice” may be valid

enough for those who can discern it, but in my view is fraught with danger for those who cannot and who follow delusory voices instead). She states that we also have power to make major changes in our lives and to "create our own reality" by positive thinking and affirmations. Above all else we must "love unconditionally," something that all members of the Findhorn Foundation assume they can do. This presumably refers to the divine attribute of love, but in practice means one does not criticise, or withdraw support from, those who behave badly.

When I later read Eileen Caddy's autobiography, *Flight into Freedom*,⁸⁷ then newly published, I understood the simplistic nature of her comments. She had been involved with Frank Buchman's Moral Rearmament movement throughout the many years of her first marriage and was saturated in their tenets and concepts. She had also been extremely open to the "Rosicrucian" convictions of Peter Caddy with whom she was in frequent contact at that time. [Peter Caddy had been a member of a so-called Rosicrucian Order, his "spiritual mentor" being one Dr. Sullivan, Supreme Magnus of the Order, further theatrically titled, "Aureolis." After Dr. Sullivan died, Peter Caddy, too, it seems, had pretensions of spiritual grandeur, as is evidenced in a recorded conversation with a former Foundation member. Complaining about the obscure "whereabouts of the British Rosicrucians," Raymond Akhurst enquired of Peter Caddy, "Who is the Rosicrucian Master now?" Caddy is said to have looked him "straight in the eyes," and replied, "Who do you think?" Raymond Akhurst further relates that Peter Caddy soon afterwards "saw that the time had come to make previously secret knowledge available and began disseminating the 'Aureolis Papers,' that he got from his teacher." See R. Akhurst, *My Life and the Findhorn Community* (Falmouth: Honey Press, 1992), p. 34].

Moral Rearmament (MRA) is a cult that relies heavily on indoctrination through peer pressure and group confession. It emphasises man's ability to change himself and his life

by listening to the "God within," the result of which is then written down and the "guidance" followed.

Eileen Caddy states in her book that she was not attracted to MRA and went along with it to keep her husband happy (*Flight into Freedom*, p. 16). She participated in the movement's "quiet times" when everyone sat to listen inwardly and then wrote down what they "heard." She says with disarming honesty that she did not ever receive guidance on these occasions and only pretended to do so, writing down whatever first came into her head.

This raises a query concerning her later guidance, received in exactly the same manner, and the basis of the beliefs she established for the Findhorn Community through her "inner directives," beliefs that endure to this day, and which are uncommonly akin to those used in Moral Rearmament. One cannot therefore readily dismiss the possibility that her subconscious mind has represented the concepts of MRA in the form of her "guidance" when fate appeared to decree it. The first time she registered the "inner voice" was at a crisis point soon after she deserted her husband to live with Peter Caddy, when she discovered to her great shock that this would cost her all future contact with the five children she had left behind. As Peter was still married to Sheena, the woman he at that time regarded as his spiritual teacher, she must have felt absolutely desperate (pp. 26-28). In this fraught situation, when sitting desolately in a sanctuary in Glastonbury, she heard a voice in her head, and on this fragile testimony Peter and Sheena were both convinced that Eileen had heard the voice of God. Eileen herself was unsure of her experience, and extremely doubtful as to its origin (p. 29).

Considerable information is given about Sheena Govan in *Flight into Freedom*, including her bizarre methods of training Eileen to respond to inner directives. This "tuition" was required of her by Peter, who accepted without query whatever Sheena decreed. As a consequence, Eileen became virtually a maidservant to this difficult, ill-humoured lady,

whose obsessive behaviour, graphically described, conveys a tyrant rather than a spiritual guide—indeed, Eileen asserts that she obeyed Sheena simply through fear and a desire to please Peter, and later, because she was afraid of losing him to Sheena's whim. On page 34, she relates how she mentally rejected this woman as her teacher and actually *hated* her, a highly questionable basis for spiritual tuition.

She details how at one time she became so overwrought through the mental conflict engendered by her own resistance to her obligatory dependence on Sheena, that her right arm became paralysed for over a week (p. 35). There are several references to psychosomatic side effects in her book, which cause one to wonder to how great an extent the pressures placed upon her by both Peter and Sheena contributed to what she actually did produce as "guidance from God" during her enforced three-times-daily meditations. A point worthy of note is that Sheena's teaching was literally the same as certain tenets later promoted as Eileen's "guidance." This doubtless made it wholly acceptable to Peter, who believed strongly at that time in Sheena's infallibility, even to the extent of permitting her abduction of his and Eileen's first child—a very dubious episode. Equally disconcerting is the information given on pp. 82–84, which brings into question far more than Sheena's authenticity, dealing as it does with the matter of her eventual rejection by Eileen and Peter, and her desolate death.

On page 84 also, Eileen speaks of her early days at Findhorn, and of the "visions, light, colours" and "level of purity" that she experienced in her prolonged meditations. She adds, "Of course, I had my doubts," and that she wondered if everything she was experiencing on these "inner planes" was simply her imagination. I found this comment quite extraordinary. My personal experience is that the deepening of insight brings commensurate certitude through its intrinsic nature. Continually, Eileen was counselled by her "inner voice" to have faith, as she could not readily believe the guidance which her own hand transcribed.

The account of Eileen's protracted meditations and their uncomfortable settings is impressive, as is the carefully worded guidance which undoubtedly contains elements of truth. But it must be remembered that the contemplative life is common to all religious bodies, of whatever faith, and is the standard hallmark of many sincere aspirants, a hallmark which does not qualify them as God's personal and infallible mouthpiece. [Critics cannot agree with the sentiments of Roy McVicar who, in a somewhat hagiographical vein, described Eileen Caddy as "a spiritual descendant of true visionaries and mystics of all ages . . ." See R. McVicar, intro. to Eileen Caddy, *The Spirit of Findhorn* (Romford: L. N. Fowler, 1977), p. 28].

Eileen records that in 1963 she studied the lectures on positive thinking given to Peter by his "first spiritual teacher" [undoubtedly Dr. Sullivan, alias "Aureolis"]. This study she consolidated by putting into practice the recommended affirmations (*Flight into Freedom*, pp. 91-93), and it is this exercise that she has continuously taught ever since.

The latter part of the book under discussion is principally concerned with the break-up of Eileen's marital relationship with Peter and her visions of their ultimate reunion. At the time the book closes, he is on the point of separating from his young wife and child, and perhaps Eileen hoped he would come back to her. In actual fact, he married someone else (his fifth marriage). The autobiography concludes with the dream-vision of Peter and Eileen crowned King and Queen with important work to do that they must do together. [Raymond Akhurst, in his book *My Life and the Findhorn Community*, duly observes that, "according to Eileen's autobiography she still dreams of being reunited with Peter." However, Akhurst more realistically added, "their last attempt to tour together was not the spiritual or material reconciliation for which she hoped . . ." (pp. 49-50). Peter Caddy later died in a road accident in February 1994].

Anyone tempted to believe unreservedly in the guidance of Peter and Eileen Caddy should first read very closely her

autobiography.

It is now widely known through varied research into methods of indoctrination that affirmations are a prime technique for use in conditioning the mind, and that any belief structure can by this means be changed for another under suitable conditions. Thus one can fully believe in all sincerity that one is a Christ-filled being and manifesting one's Christhood at every conceivable opportunity (as I have heard several people claim), when in fact one is simply deluded, and as full of resentment, jealousy, pride and hostility as anyone else.

During my stay at the Findhorn Foundation, Peter Caddy returned for a visit with his new wife, Renate, bringing with them a white-robed Indian pundit and a bevy of sari-clad Eastern and Western devotees. A large meeting was held in the Universal Hall (at the Park), at Peter's request, to promote the teachings of his Indian Guru, Babaji—supposedly immortal, but who, ironically, had recently died. Eileen was not present at the meeting.

It was apparent now that all Peter Caddy's former beliefs had given place to devotional attitudes and the acceptance of a teacher—a stark rejection of the assertions made by Eileen that one needs no other teacher than the "voice within." This must have created a potentially embarrassing situation for the Foundation as a whole, especially as they were expected to accommodate this large body of people for two days, and listen to a lengthy discourse on generalised Indian philosophy given by the elderly pundit through an interpreter, interspersed with emotive responses of "Jai, Jai, Jai!" from the devotees. It struck an incongruous note, to say the least. [The elderly pundit, named Shastriji, was the late Babaji's official preacher and, according to devotee Renate Caddy, "a great Indian sage, seer and priest"]. The pundit asserted, on his Guru's authority, that to gain enlightenment one had only to read through the whole of the Vedas.

In mid-August 1988 I attended a two-week course on "Community, Culture and Spiritual Practice" at the Foun-

dation. The course was described as "designed to meet the needs of those who want an in-depth experience of what the Findhorn Foundation does, how it does it, and what it feels like to live here." I did not attend the last session of the fortnight, feeling too upset over the denigratory treatment continually meted out towards myself by Craig Gibsone, the course focaliser, to do so. My offence was to mildly question some of his statements, particularly the claims made in reference to "The Game of Transformation"—a board game for which we collectively prepared ourselves over a period of two days. Instead, I walked along the coastal road to Findhorn village with the young male Cambridge Research Centre student who had accompanied me on the course, and who throughout had acted with commendable restraint at my request. When we were nearly there, he suddenly said he felt unaccountably afraid—his solar plexus was assailed by fear and he did not know why. Minutes later I began to feel faint and had to sit down. About half an hour passed before I was able to set off again.

On our way back we walked into the 25-strong course contingent as they left Cullerne House (where the session was held) to return to their chalets in the Park. They seemed subdued and I felt they avoided us. The young German sharing the chalet in which we were staying told us that a ceremony had been held in our absence—they called it a "Fishbowl." Three cushions had been placed in the centre of a circle, one representing myself, a second representing the CRC student, and the third for individual members of the group to take turns to sit on and address one or the other of us as if we were there. Our informant told us that this was a very emotive occasion about which he felt very unhappy, and in which he had declined to participate. He said that some persons had expressed much anger and hostility, some had said "very nice things" about us, while others cried for reasons he did not know. Shortly afterwards we were visited by the rather worried member of the Foundation who had both initiated and co-focalised this event

[Judy Buhler-McAllister], who said she hoped, in view of the probable language difficulties with our German friend, that we had not "misunderstood" what had happened and thought they had practised "Voodoo or something" on us in our absence. The reason she gave for this extreme exercise was the need to release the unresolved emotions evoked during the course through the tensions arising between its leader (Craig Gibsone) and myself. As she had only been present during the two latter sessions, she was unaware of the openly hostile attitude exhibited by Craig Gibsone whenever I made a comment, as we were all in turn asked to do several times daily in group "sharings." Many of my comments, always mildly expressed, enquired into the basis of what was taught or into the actual effects of the many techniques and exercises that we were given. These queries were perfectly legitimate, I felt. Although nobody supported me in public, a minority of those present were uneasily aware of the possible truth of what I posited. But others, as I knew by their thinly disguised antagonism, were subliminally conscious that what they themselves taught (for many of them were New Age teachers), and what they were busily appropriating from the course, was in no way productive of genuine spiritual growth. It was the course leader's inability to give adequate answers which created the tensions. Craig Gibsone would fall back on, "*This is the way we do things at the Foundation,*" or quote a New Age teacher who had recently visited the Foundation, and whose fundamental knowledge, in my view, was as deficient as his own.

Throughout the chalet conversation I felt extremely unwell, and when the visitor left I went straight to bed, unable to do anything else. I could not have attended the end-of-course festivities even had the climate amongst the group been different. The return home the next morning was acute misery. It took sixteen hours to get back to my home and I was ill all the way, much to the concern of my companion, without whose help I would not have been able to complete the journey. I collapsed into bed at its end feeling

sick and utterly spent. I was unwell for the whole of the next three weeks until whatever invaded my system had passed out of it.

Soon after my return to Cambridge I wrote a strong letter to Craig Gibsone in his official capacity as Director of the Foundation, as did my associate. I stated my conclusion that what he had instigated was the equivalent of a ceremony used in forms of voodoo to bring about certain injurious effects, and that although I was not inferring that it had been deliberately used in this context, ignorance of what was done did not unfortunately alter the result.

[For the reader who finds the concept of hostile thoughts adversely affecting another individual beyond credibility, relevant here is a report of the observations of medical anthropologist Joseph Long who, accompanied by a local physician, went to inspect the trance ceremonies of the Kumina people in southeastern Jamaica.

During the ceremony an eighty-year-old sorcerer, or "obeah-man," made repeated sexual overtures to a dancing priestess, all of which were rejected by her. Suddenly the priestess went into a deep trance, and all the usual methods used by the participants failed to awaken her. The physician examined the woman and, after observing no change for over two hours, demanded that he be allowed to take her to hospital. Some hours later (2:00 a.m.) the priestess was still in the trance. Her breathing was normal, and her pupils appeared normal and reacted as they should. Nevertheless, she died at 6:00 a.m. with no further symptoms, according to the hospital records.

There are, of course, a variety of explanations for reports of hex death. The most common is that the victim "shares the same belief in the effectiveness of hexing as the hexer." However, it was also noted by Richard Broughton, Director of Research at the Institute for Parapsychology in Durham, North Carolina, who recounted the above event, that there are numerous reports of hex deaths where the victim *did not know* that he or she was hexed—"they are part of a large

group of reports that have no satisfactory medical or psychosocial explanation." See R. Broughton, *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science* (London: Rider, 1991), pp. 31-32].

I appealed separately to Carol Riddell, a former sociologist and resident member of the Findhorn Foundation to whom I had talked after the "fishbowl" episode and who was sympathetic at the time, and sent her copies of the full correspondence concerning this matter. Her quite lengthy, jargon-laden response, dated October 16th 1988, contained the following:

"... I cannot believe that you have ever really grasped what we are about here, and because of this, all the miscommunication and unhappiness has developed... I see what happened to you in Findhorn as entirely your own creation, your own message to yourself to show you what in you needs to change so that you can get nearer to your own Essence and be less restricted by your physical and psychological problems. It is your teaching for yourself, created by you..."

The vested interests of certain individuals who would not enjoy so comfortable a lifestyle (nor such status) outside the Foundation, unfortunately tend to blunt their willingness to acknowledge things they do not feel happy about. Several members who agreed with honesty to points made by me in personal conversations became silent on these issues when their open agreement was vital, and this could only be because they feared to step out of line. Perhaps Carol Riddell was one of them, for the stance she took during a private talk at the Park was quite different to that of her letter. This may be a very human attitude, but it does not betoken much integrity.

At this point, I withdrew entirely from the Findhorn Foundation, being fully occupied with other things. The previous autumn the Cambridge Research Centre for Metaphysical and Evolutionary Studies (CRC), of which I was then director of studies, had mounted two seminars, one at Potters Bar for a privately invited audience, and a second which took

place at Wolfson College, Cambridge. Owing to my activities in Scotland there had been very few student group meetings in Cambridge, and these I now resumed. However, I knew that it was still necessary to investigate the Findhorn Foundation further, and with this in mind, the following spring wrote several letters and arranged an interview with a staff member whom I knew quite well. As a result of this I spent a further week at Cluny Hill College, and during this period found a delightful and unusually spacious cottage to rent in Findhorn village, which I arranged to take as soon as it was available. This transpired to be early September 1989. As I was now resident in the area I took the opportunity to become an Associate member of the Findhorn Foundation, which enabled me to undertake part-time work within the Foundation on a voluntary basis. This time I worked at the Park, in homecare or the kitchen, with an occasional domestic shift in Cluny Hill College.

During this period I sent a letter to Eric Franciscus, head of the educational department of the Findhorn Foundation, with the proposal that I might be allowed to run a series of talks for the membership (without charge) based on the lectures I had given to CRC students. I did not receive a reply, but learned, when I telephoned, that my proposal had been rejected in respect of Internal Education. There were no reasons given for this decision.

A fortnight after sending the letter, I found the following in the Education Branch minutes of November 14th as circulated in the members internal newsletter *Rainbow Bridge*:

"Kate Thomas: a letter was received from her with many interesting ideas for workshops. It was agreed that she should be offered facilities to rent our premises throughout the winter season and the workshops could be advertised in *Rainbow Bridge*. They *would not be part of internal education*" (*italics mine*).

The description of my course as "workshops" here demonstrated a common misunderstanding at the Foundation

about other forms of education. Neither my talks or classes were ever "workshops," a term which implies an excitatory and emotive participation and attendant expectancy.

Nevertheless, I decided to proceed, and notification of an introductory talk, open to whoever wished to attend, was placed on the noticeboards.

My first talk taught me something further about the "New Age" expectations drilled into visitors both before and after arriving at the Foundation. There were more than a dozen of them who turned up, but nearly all of them had a hopeless attitude in response to anything metaphysical. They had been conditioned by New Age writers, therapists, and counsellors into believing that there were "techniques" available which could give some kind of short-cut to happiness and psychic and/or occult powers. They were not actually interested in spirituality—with which they confused such distractions. One person kept asking, "What about techniques, then?" He clearly had a one-track mind, and I believe that anybody could have sold him anything they wanted if it sounded sufficiently bizarre. Another man was even more impatient. He pointedly asked, "What is *your* particular technique? Can you describe it? Let's get to the crux of it all." He gave the distinct impression of being in a hurry, as if he had an urgent engagement elsewhere and might decide to practice my "technique" for five minutes if he thought it sufficiently enticing. I had to disappoint them by keeping to the subject matter of my talk, in which the dangers presented by "techniques" were referred to. The amount of damage done to some of these visitors by so-called therapists was already incalculable.

My second talk yielded only six participants, one of whom was a resident staff member. There was a clear reason for this small number. The tangible hostility from the staff members (who included purported healers and therapists) had extended to the advertising leaflet for my talk. This leaflet was literally eclipsed by a pending men's group—the participants covered up my leaflet on the notice-board with their

own poster. When I salvaged my obscured leaflet only half an hour before the talk, I found that the word "Associate" had been boldly inscribed in black ink by some uninvited hand alongside my name. This pointed inscription was plainly intended to emphasise to all members and visitors that my talk was in no sense part of the prescribed official programme. The talk was by-passed accordingly. [No further talks were attempted by Kate Thomas, in view of the extreme antagonism from the staff].

In November 1989 I learned what raised the highest enthusiasm amongst the Foundation's educationalists. It was a technique known as Holotropic Breathwork™ imported from the U.S.A. and promoted by the originator, Dr. Stanislav Grof.

Grof was formerly a prominent psychiatric researcher before becoming Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute of California, a commercial New Age therapy centre. He is well known for his psychedelic research into non-ordinary states of consciousness with the use of LSD, a controversial subject. Holotropic therapy is considered by enthusiasts to be a major "breakthrough," being a non-pharmacological technique (of hyperventilation) which provides a rapid entry into normally obscured areas of the psyche.

This technique of hyperventilation had provoked considerable criticism in some quarters, but in other quarters its reception was euphoric. Here at last was a rapidly effective tool that gave unarguable results. What these results were had not exactly been ascertained, but it was affirmed that *some* people had produced mystical experiences akin to those of the greatest saints.

I listened with mingled horror and disbelief to a cassette tape of Grof's recorded talk on the subject. On tape at least he was cautious enough to state that his research work was experimental, and that he, personally, did not know *why* certain syndromes occur, and did not know the possible short or long term consequences. Yet he also asserted that it was now undeniably possible for people to experience for themselves the same states as those ascribed to Jesus Christ in

the New Testament, as well as a whole range of states that appeared to be the A-Z of the Creation process. This range of states included identification with rock, fish, plant and animal, likewise with supernatural forces, some of which were demonic. The experiences could also contain "replays" of past traumatic or life-threatening episodes. There seemed to be a strong element of confusion with LSD experiences in all this.

To Craig Gibsone (the Director of the Foundation) and others, holotropic therapy meant an "instant" way to achieve enlightenment, and he promoted a "trial run" for members and associates of the Foundation, a series of sessions conducted by guest American facilitators culminating their training periods with Dr. Grof. It was difficult at first to ascertain exactly what happened at the sessions—the people involved were committed to secrecy in order to preserve each other's privacy, as what was initially "unlocked" in the individual psyche was often unpleasant and produced a variety of extreme reflex actions, including vomiting and hysteria. One resident member who declined to join in the sessions, feeling the enforced "break in" to the psyche was somehow morally incorrect, positioned himself (he told me) where he could observe the participants as they left at the conclusion of the event. He was shocked by the disorientation of some of his friends, a *dis*-orientation that persisted for hours, days, and in some cases, weeks, afterwards. I asked several people why they found this situation acceptable and indeed compatible with spiritual development. The naive reply was that the soul was in control and would not permit lasting harm to come to them, that the soul brought forward into consciousness only what could be coped with—and the more traumatic the experience, the stronger the effects and the greater the cleansing and healing of the entire organism. This is what they had been told by the Director and the other focalisers. Yet Grof himself states: "It is important to realise that holotropic work is completely open-ended. It is best to think about it as an ongoing research project and

psychological experiment.”⁸⁸

The fact is that the effects of this holotropic therapy are frequently extreme, and include projectile sickness, choking, screaming, violent displays of emotion, uninhibited expressions of sexual eroticism, and prolonged aftermaths of disturbed equilibrium and disorientation. The level of noise from the Universal Hall (at the Park) when the sessions were in process, primarily caused by screaming, was such that non-participants were obliged to suspend all work in that area and ban the presence of visitors. Letters were written to *Rainbow Bridge* (the internal newsletter for members) on the subject and fully substantiated the above. The response from enthusiasts was that the innermost self is in control, and the distressing release of energies normally locked in the subconscious is self-healing and therefore the technique is “safe.”

This holotropic breathwork so perturbed me that I made an appointment to see Eileen Caddy in order to learn her views on the matter. It was now late February 1990, and a further, and major, cycle of holotropic sessions was about to get under way. Eileen, to my surprise, agreed with my concern, which I had not anticipated as she had made no move to counter the breathwork or to convey her views to the membership of the Foundation. I suggested she should do this. She replied that she had received no “guidance” to do so—her guidance had long ago informed her that people must learn things for themselves. Her *personal* guidance had prevented her from participating, and she believed it could be dangerous for her to go against this—she had therefore made Craig Gibsone remove her name from the lists of those wishing to proceed (where he had placed it alongside his own), but other than this, she had no instruction. I pointed out that the presence of her name alone would of itself have sanctioned the breathwork, and that the situation surely required something further. I stressed that, although many persons had joined the Foundation for the wrong reasons (a point with which she concurred), there were others who had

upheaved their lifestyles and committed themselves to the community through reading her books, and in trust of her directive. Surely she had a responsibility to these people and should make her views publicly known before a possible tragedy occurred? These people were not psychiatric patients and not in need of psychotherapy. This uncalled for interference in their psychological processes could cause much damage. Some could become seriously deranged, or even die . . . *"Perhaps that is what must happen,"* she said, "to make them pay heed."

This attitude staggered me. I asked if she had acquainted Craig Gibsons of her "guidance" when she withdrew her name from the list of participants. Her reply was yes. I then asked why he had not paid heed to this warning, or to *her* as the co-founder of the community, on whose guidance it had come into being. She said that he did not wish to listen and had opposed her before on other issues. When pressed she divulged that a number of staff members had also ignored what she said in the past, so she no longer put forward her views. To me, this still evaded the issue of all the non-staff people who were unaware of these internal politics and looked to her guidance in trust. Eileen, however, was adamant, and asked me to "release" (not to personally pursue the issue) my concern to her, affirming that she would look into the matter with the American facilitator. I did so, as there was nothing else I could do.

Several days later, when the holotropic breathwork sessions were already in progress, Eileen for the first time telephoned me, and said she was "much happier" now about the situation as, through her intervention, Craig and the head facilitator (personally trained by Dr. Grof, and in charge of the sessions) had arranged a follow-up group for those who might need help on a "spiritual emergency" basis. I was unaware that any single member of the Foundation was qualified to attend to crisis victims, many of whom had entered extreme psychotic-type states during the breathwork sessions and who afterwards suffered prolonged psychologi-

cal problems as a direct consequence. Indeed, when official notice of this hastily arranged facility was prominently displayed, I saw to my sadness that the persons appointed could do no more than administer "counselling."

Eileen never did make a public announcement, either spoken or written. Several people to whom I mentioned our conversation expressed astonishment, even disbelief, at what she had said, not having any idea that she was opposed to the breathwork therapy—in relation to which arrangements were now being made to make the Foundation an International training centre for its commercial promotion. The financial considerations were succinctly expressed by staff member Ulla Sebastian in *Rainbow Bridge* on 10th May 1990: "... the income out of the training programme itself is only one aspect. We also need to consider that we are qualifying people to give workshops in a realm which opens up to a deep inner spiritual knowing and which can provide a good shoulder season income on top of it, and that we can potentially earn substantial sums by hosting of workshops for the public in the future."

This statement arose in response to several concerned protests from various areas of the community which were earlier voiced in the same internal newsletter. One such protest was sent in by an Associate member, who exposed the actual methodology of holotropic breathing. [That method was no doubt the reason why so many Foundation members wished to experience the drug-like "high" induced by hyperventilation]. The letter read:

"Any active jogger in the community will no doubt be aware of what is termed 'runners high'—that moment of euphoria and wellbeing sometimes experienced after pushing the body to its limits, and beyond. The 'high' is due to cerebral hypoxia: the reduction of oxygen transmitted to the cortex of the brain. Very few objectively-minded persons encountering such a state would deem it 'spiritual,' and quite rightly so. It is a physiological response of the brain triggered by bodily stress and oxygen deprivation. Endogenous opioid peptides, such

as endorphins and enkephalins—morphinelike chemicals—are secreted by certain brain cells to alleviate the organism's distress.

"Holotropic breathing (H.B.) induces an abnormal degree of cerebral hypoxia, which is known to give rise to seizure activity in the brain's limbic system. This will affect lobal areas of the brain associated with memory and emotion. The symptoms of limbic lobe agitation include: depersonalisation, involuntary memory recall, intense emotion, euphoria, auditory and visual hallucinations. All of which are known to arise through holotropic breathing.

"The use of rhythmic breathing, music, dance, ritual, hallucinogenics, narrative, emotional arousal, sex, physical exertion etc., have been applied in one form or another throughout all Ages and ethnic cultures to induce altered states of consciousness. Legitimate traditions warn against any practice employed in an *ad hoc* manner upon a random collection of people at differing stages of evolutionary growth and needs. Such techniques will merely produce counterfeit experiences—not spirituality—and can be seriously damaging to the developmental potential of the participants . . ."

Another Associate member, who signed herself Jane, wrote:

"I have not experienced H.B. myself and actually am glad that I have not, and so am writing about what I have heard from others, about my own impressions and about my meeting with Lewis who led the last H.B. workshop.

"Delightful though Lewis is, I was deeply shocked to discover in our meeting that he himself, whilst leading the Holotropic Breathwork, is terrified of 'falling through the ice': in other words is terrified of what states this process could take him into. To have someone leading this process, the purpose of which, I understand, is to take one into transpersonal states, who is very frightened indeed of their own inner state, to me is alarming and highly irresponsible.

"I see no safety net whatsoever for people who need care following the breathwork sessions . . . I am coming rapidly to the conclusion that Holotropic Breathwork is a 'glamour'

device, good for fast fame and fortune but not much else."

In the same May 30th issue of *Rainbow Bridge* was an open letter to Craig Gibsone from a fellow senior staff member. Alec Whittam clearly felt strongly over the issue of Holotropic Breathwork™, and his letter referred solely to this. I quote it in full:

"I presume that all the written feedback you received (about H.B.) has been 'aired' in the *Rainbow Bridge*. By my count there was one in favour, five against, and one concerned and offering suggestions. I also see from the proposed schedule for 1991 that some kind of decision has been made to 'go ahead.'

"My gut feeling is that we are asking for trouble with this type of work. I question whether we know enough to be able to hold and contain whatever is being released. It feels to me that this is highly focused individual therapy which requires teachers who are, or should be, spiritual adepts.

"I question whether this type of workshop is compatible with our work/vision here. Remember David Spangler's comments on 'remembering'?

"As far as I am concerned my whole being screams NO... there is danger for you here. I do not know in an intellectual way why I have this reaction, but I must pay attention.

"So, as one of the 'leaders' of our Foundation I want to stand up and be counted. I cannot support the continuation of this work under the auspices of the Foundation."

A third letter in *Rainbow Bridge* on May 30th was from the Director himself, and was obviously intent upon reassuring the fearful and expressing vexation with protesters. Here are several excerpts:

"I have been working with spiritual growth and awareness for the last 25 years and have done some very radical things. The Holotropic Breathwork, while being powerful and dynamic in giving the individual access to other levels of the self which are appropriate at the time, is very safe, loving and caring.

"Reading reflections [of critics] . . . I see what they fear in the breathwork are in fact the very things which make me want to do it—and that this centre [Findhorn Foundation] is one of loving transformation which works beyond the confines of their world view.

"Finally, this centre has something to add to the holotropic work, as I feel that it is still developing and we can assist in its integration. Remember—there are many highly developed adepts and initiates living and working here. Love, Craig."

The Associate member who first aired a criticism of Holotropic Breathwork™ responded immediately to this letter, and sent his comments to *Rainbow Bridge*. The Editor refused publication of this document and sent it back, saying that he must ask Craig's permission first before she would include it. The Associate [Stephen Castro] therefore sent a courtesy copy to Craig, and followed this with a copy of the Editor's request. There was no reply, and the document in question did not get into print at the Foundation. The suppressed document is, however, quoted here:

"My initial response to the Holotropic Breathwork Therapy 'survey' was prompted by Craig Gibsone's comments in RB that: 'The Foundation is seriously considering doing a three year training programme.' By the word 'Foundation,' I had, it now seems, naively assumed this meant the collective community. I was wrong. In this instance the 'Foundation' equated to a clique known as Education Branch. The 'survey' was in fact little more than a farce, as the decision to go ahead had already been made without a consensus of opinion. It is quite apparent that the borderline between autonomy and dictatorship at departmental level is somewhat nebulous in the Foundation at present. There should, of course, have been an open forum debate to discuss the issue of Holotropic Breathwork™ before any further HB sessions are held, let alone incorporated as an ongoing programme for those few members whose personal ambition is to do the training.

"I do not doubt that Craig has done 'some very radical things' during the past 25 years . . . though this is no guarantee that 'spiritual growth and awareness' ensued. Nor is it a credential for adepthood. But then, Craig is not (at least as far as I am aware, and as he would doubtless agree) one of the 'highly developed adepts and initiates' living and working as Foundation members referred to in his letter. I would, however, be most interested to meet these 'highly developed adepts' amongst the membership. Perhaps one or more of them would like to step forward and declare themselves?

"I did once hear of a young Experience Week participant who thought her focaliser was a 'Cosmic Master,' but the illusion was soon dispelled when the Master in question starting telling risqué jokes.

"Commenting on what he describes as critical 'reflections,' Craig goes on to state: 'I see that what they fear in the breathwork are in fact the very things which make me want to do it.' Let me refresh the memories of RB readers as to what some of these 'very things' are:

"Cerebral hypoxia leading to seizure activity in the brain's limbic system/Temporal lobe agitation/Bio-chemical intoxication.

"These were but a few of the points raised, and which seem to make Craig 'want to do it.' But then, by his own admission, he likes to experiment with 'radical things.'"

It should here be added that Alec, the dissident staff member, retracted his remarks against Holotropic Breathwork™ after facing peer pressure to do so in a meeting of the Foundation's "Core Group" which occurred in June. However, he noticeably would not attend any of the subsequent Holotropic sessions.

The Core Group was composed of staff members or focalisers [many of whom were Holotropic Breathwork™ supporters], and included the Director and also Eileen Caddy, who wanted to be part of it. Alec later recounted to me the events of this rather tense meeting of authority figures. Only

he and Eileen expressed disagreement with the decision to implement Holotropic Breathwork™ as an integral feature of the Foundation. But both of them gave in to the majority view expressed by the Director, who convinced them that they were projecting their own "stuff" (meaning personal psychological reactions).

The Foundation paid great deference to commercial celebrities—trendsetters in therapy and transpersonal psychology. Despite the lip service paid to scientific interests, these were actually in very low profile save for the transpersonal variety. This scarcity of the scientific element was thrown into acute relief during the autumn of 1989, when staff members became alarmed at the low level of interest in a scheduled scientific conference which the Foundation was organising on its premises. Until the last moment, it was feared that very few guests would attend. There seemed to be a strange lack of interest amongst subscribers, visitors, associates, and full members. It was discovered that only a very few members of the Foundation were at all scientifically minded, and even fewer were competent to give a talk on a scientific subject to an internal audience. Nevertheless, a Management meeting held on the 10th October decided that, "Financially it would be worse to pull out now than to go ahead." The Conference was rather ambiguously entitled: *The Beauty of Surprise* (subtitled *Science and Mystery in a Self-Creating Universe*).

This caption arose from the rather naive interpretation of "chaos" theory (relating to physics) in vogue amongst the organisers. Their assumption was that a contrived "unstructured" Conference (intended to be representative of "chaos") would, in some mysterious manner, model the natural emergent organising behaviour of a dissipative structure evading entropy. The general vagueness of the organisers tended to accentuate the indifferent and anti-scientific attitude evidenced by the community as a whole.

The Conference organisers grew desperate. There were only a small number of committed guests for the event, and

interest required urgent acceleration on the home front. There were problems in physics, and only one member was able to give a convincing pre-Conference introductory talk on Einstein and related matters (drawing heavily from a recently published book). There were a few people who could muster knowledge of transpersonal psychology, but for a brief time at least, it dawned upon the staff members that the field of professional psychology was somewhat larger than commercial New Age therapy and transpersonal interests.

According to all reports, the above-mentioned Conference appeared to have been anything but scientific. A full report by Andrew Murray was made available in the Spring 1990 issue of *One Earth* (Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 8ff.). Judging by this it would seem that every stop in the therapy spectrum was pulled out in the "work groups" that largely comprised this Conference. In great evidence were the usual masculine/feminine issues which externalised in all-male and all-female groupings on the fourth day of the Conference. The male group brought forth its fears of varying kinds, including those surrounding violence, failure, and sexual guilt . . . "Problems with power. Anger at ourselves and each other. Fear of growing old and unlovely . . . Along with the pain was also pride and joy in maleness, power and sexuality. We cried, laughed and snarled at each other." Later, they were joined by the women, who described their experiences of "disempowerment and exploitation." A woman described being raped. One woman began to "weep and moan, incoherent with pain and grief, huddled on the floor while others held her. The Hall was full of emotion—compassion, impatience, anger, fear . . . A man stepped into the group and offered himself, 'like Dionysus,' as a sacrifice . . . Gradually the process ran down to a stunned conclusion. People seemed relieved, but puzzled and unresolved." Extra to this "scientific" curriculum was an all-night session: "This started out loud and raunchy with drumming and chanting and some wild dancing. It ran down towards 3:30 a.m. Its most notable after-effect was the discovery next morning by the women's

barber shop group coming to rehearse, of a couple making love on the floor of the music room." The male party to this event had behaved erratically throughout the gathering; he was quite obviously emotionally disturbed but allowed to remain a participant. At one point he seriously alarmed a female speaker by approaching her and threatening her with a concrete building block during her address, and spent the week "demanding attention . . . and interrupting presentations . . . In this he was a true embodiment of chaos. People were tolerant and sought to nurture and integrate him. Some people (more often men) romanticised his clown role and obscured the acute distress that some women experienced . . . finding his attentions offensive . . . On a number of occasions women expressed concern, but were reassured by men . . . that he was harmless." This man was staying at Newbold House, "where he has stayed in the past and is known." (His booking was therefore not accepted in ignorance).

At some point in this hectic week of emotional indulgences, speakers spoke, and a "western mystery ritual" was enacted. Not included in the account was the well-confirmed verbal report that a more extroverted staff member of the Foundation had supplied his own element of "Surprise," at some late evening high point, by walking stark naked through the Universal Hall. To sum up the Conference I again quote from Andrew Murray's revealing write-up: "The group organising the Gathering from within the Foundation lacked, on the whole, in-depth knowledge of the scientific ideas which the Gathering was invoking, and the tools to absorb them. Although members [invited speakers] of the presenting group . . . had impressive credentials, the Gathering as a whole failed to integrate this knowledge and allowed for little more than passing reference to it."

There was a further series of Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions at the Park involving Dr. Grof's commercial experiment in hyperventilation, bodywork, and excessively loud music. The resident therapists had become accustomed to

pronouncing this experiment to be part of a spiritual development programme, reassured against the minority of doubts by the Director's insistence upon the "esoteric" complement of sessions and courses. All feelings of sickness and hysteria encountered in Holotropic Breathwork™ were stated to be of spiritual import. Mr. Gibsone became one of the major facilitators conducting these Breathwork sessions.

One female participant gave a report of her experiences in *Rainbow Bridge* (February 14th, 1991, p. 6). "At one point I felt trapped, as though in a mental asylum," she reflected, though the report attempted a positive interpretation of the traumas encountered. She enjoyed the music that was played, but the breathing intensification produced an experience of "pain, darkness and suffering." This led to a scene in which the Director of the Foundation and other male facilitators held her arms and legs "while pressing points on my body." She struggled against them and "expended a lot of suppressed rage. I screamed long and loud, until my voice was too hoarse to continue. Then I collapsed in a quivering wreck, too exhausted to fight anymore." This woman attended two subsequent sessions, and was engulfed by despair when she "remembered" acutely her unpleasant experiences as a victim of child abuse. She decided that this was a positive step, which she was certainly led to believe. She mentioned that she welcomed the women's support group that was to commence the same week, described in the same issue (p. 7) as an "incest survivors self-help/support group." It appears that a number of other women had similar traumatic experiences in Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, and it would seem inevitable that they needed some form of support group, which was notably averse to any masculine presence. The writer abovementioned reported with honesty that her male partner "spent most of his three hour session (of H.B.) in blissful surrender, enjoying a vast array of sexual fantasies."

In the general euphoria over Holotropic Breathwork™, it was disconcerting to some of the more sensitive members of the Foundation to learn of a strongly alleged case of sexual

abuse of a child occurring within Foundation ranks, amongst residents of the caravan park. This case was investigated by the police and social services in the winter of 1991. Courtenay Young, the leading therapist in the Foundation, wrote at the time: "It is highly unlikely that anything can or will be proved beyond all shadow of doubt and therefore speculation as to who are involved seems totally inappropriate." (*Rainbow Bridge*, February 20th, 1991, p. 7). [It was, however, strongly rumoured that the individual who committed the crime was a practitioner of Neo-Reichian therapy, a man well known at the Foundation].

In the Findhorn Foundation Guest programme for March to November, 1989, was an article by Eileen Caddy in which she described her participation in the Planetary Game of Transformation. This game took place during the internal conference, and was played by the whole community. Eileen took a principal role after exhibiting considerable resistance. She says: "This meant I had to put myself out there in front of the whole community! I prayed as I had never done before for the highest possible outcome. I was terrified! My prayers were answered because each move I made on the board was perfect in every way. All I can say is that I have never felt so loved, appreciated, supported and respected as I did when I played that Game of Transformation. I *was* transformed. My whole attitude towards the community changed and it has continued in that way ever since. I realised that it was I who had to do the changing first, and the community responded accordingly.

"Since that time, I feel closer to the community than I have ever felt, and I have been in it for 26 years! I am no longer hiding myself in the background; I find I can say what I feel about the spiritual side of things because I know that is paramount and because I know I will be listened to. Through it all not only did my attitude change towards the centre of the community, but I feel the whole community went through a transformation and rebirth as well. It is difficult for me to pinpoint exactly how or where this rebirth is taking

place as I experience it very much as a feeling.

"Like the Prodigal Son, we have returned to the Father, to the Source, and there is great rejoicing. This is God's community as it was in the beginning and as it always will be. We are moving up onto that higher turn of the spiral. Praise be!"

These statements were evidently not serious enough to extend into the subsequent holotropic phase, but they do attest Eileen Caddy's conviction in the efficacy of the board game named "The Game of Transformation," and also constitute a glowing advertisement for its use. She thus sanctioned the numerous, and very expensive courses arranged by the Foundation staff on the behalf of InnerLinks Inc., the business company initiated by two former members of the Foundation who created this game. Until recently, this game was selling for £37 in its presentation box, though the price may have been increased since I last enquired. It has been incorporated into a number of different courses on a regular basis, courses which make much of group participation in this game set. But it also holds the status of a course in its own right, to the extent indeed that there are now also related Training Programmes for Facilitators, Special Topic Training, and Training for Workshop Leaders. The claims made for this game have been regarded as infantile by intelligent people, who view it only as an alternative to amusement arcades. The two former Foundation members who created it made a very successful marketing venture of it in America, and even in more sober England, wealthy women are prepared to pay several hundred pounds to "learn" it and then "teach" it themselves, for a fee.

The habit of making the concept of transformation into a game is remarkably regular amongst affluent Westerners neglecting to cultivate a due critical acumen (which is less remunerative).

In the spring of 1991, I reapplied for Associate membership, having lapsed this some six months earlier for various reasons, not least of which was a sudden bereavement which

necessitated my presence elsewhere for some months. I therefore made an application and, after some delay, was invited by Loren Stewart (an American, and focaliser of Personnel Administration Group) for an interview, and here I met an immediate stumbling block. The problem, it seemed, was not my past criticism of Holotropic Breathwork™ (which I reiterated), nor my objections to "The Game of Transformation" in its unproven though well-advertised role as a "tool for growth based on esoteric principles." No, the hesitation in reincluding me, stemmed solely from the "incompatibility" of my "energies" with the integrity of certain of the Foundation membership.

As this nebulous matter of "energies" had never been mentioned before, I asked the names of these unknown staff members, and also the actual nature of their grievance against me, as I genuinely did not know. This information was not forthcoming, despite the fact that I spent two hours at the interview, at the end of which I was told that further discussion was necessary and that this would be arranged for three weeks time. Although I was in considerable pain throughout the interview, having severely sprained my ankle the previous day, and which furthermore made walking very difficult, I was not allowed to have lunch, or even to enter, the Community Centre—a courtesy never normally withheld from anyone, and for which privilege I would willingly have paid.

[One might ask what "energies" more readily conformed to the "integrity" of the Foundation staff concerned. Evidently those, it seemed, exhibited by a young woman named Jashana, who had quite openly proclaimed: "My spiritual life has been a healthy combination of drugs, sex, rock n' roll n' reggae which I dutifully repressed with an unhealthy dose of ashram life in the Bahamas." Her "energies" must surely have been compatible, as she was to later become a staff member and to represent the Foundation's work overseas. Ironically, her confession had been printed in the very same issue of *Rainbow Bridge* that announced to the Foundation

membership that the proffered talks of Kate Thomas "would not be part of internal education"].

I was obliged to return to Cambridge for a few weeks at this juncture, but before I did so I learned from Jill Brierley (who had been present at my interview with Loren) that it was Eric Franciscus who had vetoed the renewal of my Associate membership and had influenced other Foundation staff against me. Whilst in Cambridge, I was contacted by Gemma Whibley, a former CRC student of mine who was at this time part of the Community Apprentice Programme (CAP) at the Foundation. She was very upset, and gave some disturbing information concerning what was being said about me by the staff members at Cluny Hill College, where she was in residence. This related to statements purportedly made by me, and things I had supposedly done, all quite untrue, and hostile comments such as there was "no way" that persons such as myself could find acceptance at Cluny Hill College—this latter from the current overall focaliser (Marilyn Kennedy), to whom I had never spoken, and with whom I had not even come into contact.

A few days later Gemma wrote to a mutual friend in Cambridge and recounted the substance of her conversations with various people, most of whom had much to say about myself, all of it hearsay or the product of distortion. Several persons repeated the same story—one she refuted as an assumption that had no basis. Her letter continued:

"This story seems to have been put out by Eric Franciscus (a German member of staff and Head of Education)—and Alec, Ulf, and others all used the same words.

"Eric's point of view was far more serious and flagrantly distorted, and he offered me a picture of Kate that in no way did I recognise. . . . He put Kate in the category of 'weird' people (who would definitely be kept out of the Foundation), a category which also included someone seriously psychologically unbalanced. He said that what she had to offer was not in alignment with what the Foundation wished to promote. They wanted well-known people like Caroline Myss,

David Earl Platts, William Bloom, etc.; 'reliable' drawers of people who were also likely to be money spinners. He also said that unless Kate changed he wasn't prepared to listen to her..." The letter concluded with the comment: "Eric himself said and puts it about that he believes that God has given him the custodianship of Cluny Hill College. He has also stated that he is aware of the diminishment of his own ego."

Gemma's reactions to what was being said produced problems for herself. People began to treat her as if she was a troublemaker, and some were very rude and offensive. Her implication that something was gravely wrong within the staff membership of the Foundation did not endear her to persons bent on having a good time, and who resented the emotional distress she demonstrated. She had tried on four occasions to arrange a meeting with Eileen Caddy, not on the issue of myself, but in relation to the fact that certain focalisers had given credence and time to a self-confessed male witch who was part of an active coven, and to a woman (with whom he at this point commenced a relationship) who wished to conduct magical rituals involving the evocation of "elementals"—their joint declared intent being to "take over" the Findhorn Foundation for its betterment and progress. These staff members had even allowed the two witches to utilise the group meditative resources to this end. Eileen Caddy had sanctioned the woman's credibility by telling her in a private interview that she would one day be "a great healer," or teacher, and Gemma wished to know *why*. This matter was so serious in its "occult" manifestations that the couple were despatched from Cluny Hill College before their term of residence was completed. But for whatever the reason, Eileen Caddy declined to give Gemma a hearing, and Eric Franciscus likewise chose not to do so. Feeling frustrated in the extreme, Gemma wrote him a letter, dated 13th August, a copy of which she also sent to Marilyn Kennedy, the College focaliser, and from which I now quote:

"... The Findhorn Foundation's representatives cannot

crush someone's reputation merely because they see fit to handle this situation in this curious way. According to Kate, no group, be it core group, management etc., have given or allowed her a proper hearing with regard to this slander. I find this absolutely astonishing in what is purported to be a centre of openness, 'sharings,' let alone the 'unconditional love.' Why is it different in this case? How often are other people mishandled and grossly misrepresented in other ways and other cases? For me personally this represents an eye opener and an education, illustrating aspects of the Foundation's representatives that I hadn't known before and which I find disturbing, making me question what the Findhorn Foundation is really standing for and what it actually really upholds, by the representatives who carry it forward into the future.

"... Are you or anyone else prepared to put this right? And if not, why not? If you won't 'hear' me on this, what do I have to do to be heard? To me this is a matter of principle that has been grossly flaunted. It cannot be left unchallenged. What is wrong is wrong, whichever way one tries to look at it."

The upshot of this was a yet more stressful time for Gemma. Eric was extremely annoyed on receipt of the letter, and particularly as a copy had been sent to someone else. He warned Gemma that if she persisted in taking this matter further, she was liable to get "burnt." His manner was so hostile throughout this conversation that Gemma telephoned me in Cambridge and broke down completely; her position at the College was rapidly becoming untenable. A former fellow student of CRC now took up the matter on Gemma's behalf and attempted to reach Eric by telephone, but Eric refused to speak to him, and instead—fearing the possibility of legal action—arranged a meeting that evening between Gemma and himself, with Loren Stewart and Jill Brierley in attendance. This was obviously intended to rectify his position in the eyes of others and put Gemma in her place. Gemma was so alarmed by all this that she requested that

a friend of hers (who happened to be a doctor) should also attend the meeting to support her and prevent further intimidation. This the friend agreed, whereupon the meeting was suddenly put forward two hours and the friend was hard pressed to arrive on time. The date was August 15th. Gemma's report on this meeting was contained in a letter to the former CRC student who had intervened on her behalf, which she sent off the following day. I quote:

"Eric said that if he had known I was going to quote him back on himself he would have put things very differently—phrased it more carefully—he cited the example that if he was talking to a journalist he would put things differently than if it were someone else. He said that because of this I had 'betrayed his integrity.'

"Eric called me a liar, quoting my saying I hadn't used his name when referring to the 'threat'—because I must have done so for my friend in Cambridge to phone. I replied that of course I had used his name on that occasion, it was nonsense not to; that when I said I *hadn't* used his name it referred to the time he had spoken to my CAP focaliser, who had reported to him that I had expressed anger in my CAP group 'sharings' [open discussions]—but that as far as I could remember I had never used his name on these occasions. This anger arose when he spoke to me after reading my letter—when he warned me that if I continued to ask questions I would get 'burnt.' He altered this (the meaning of his threat) at the meeting to an expression of his concern that I was being caught between two stand-points—Kate and the Foundation—and that his 'suggestion' had been that I shouldn't get involved in this as I was a nice person and could get 'burnt.' Eric expressed this with more force and emotion than I have written it.

"Eric asserted that he still stood by what he said about Kate. I said, 'Even though it wasn't true?' But he intimated that to him it was true. I said that the picture that Eric put forward of Kate was one I in no way recognised, and I had known her for at least five years.

"When Loren spoke, he intimated that Eric had spoken too freely and out of turn, and if I had any questions to ask, to go to *him*. It seemed to me that he belittled Eric, though he himself was being very careful in what he was saying.

"Loren said that Kate first became notorious (his word) in relation to the letters in *Rainbow Bridge* and her views on Holotropic Breathwork™. My friend, being a medical doctor, countered this and put her concerns forward about the medical view of the hyperventilation technique used in holotropic breathing and the brain damage it could cause, saying that Kate was quite right to hold her standpoint."

Gemma concluded, "Eric came out of the whole meeting very badly, especially having been put down by Loren in a subtle way. . . ."

When I got back to Scotland, a further letter, delivered by hand, arrived from Gemma:

"I had a 'new members' interview (we all did) on Tuesday morning, and I thought it was suspicious when I found out that mine was to be with Loren Stewart. Naturally, only part of the interview was about CAP, the rest about the Administration Group's decision about yourself and also where I stood 'in the Foundation' . . . He said that Admin. Group had met to discuss your request for a meeting re Associate membership, but they had decided that there would be no meeting of any kind, and that as far as he was concerned the 'curtain had been brought down on the subject' and that you had been informed. Before this he had been probing me to find out where I stood on this issue and I spoke of my deep concern, as a CAP member, and how this situation had arisen and wasn't being dealt with straightforwardly, and that to me it represented wrongs within the Foundation itself, as a whole, and my concern about this . . . it seemed he was asking me to make a decision, and I felt I would have to leave on the spot. Loren said I hadn't been 'fully present' lately within the Foundation, and this would have to be rectified, implying heavily to me that I had to fully align

with the Foundation and drop all the issue around the unsubstantiated remarks about you, or leave... I felt this matter was not finished yet and just said I needed time. But he knew exactly where I stood, and that I could not align myself with the Foundation, particularly after the decision they had made, and that, in effect, they had fully supported Eric.

"Later on I heard that Management Group had also met to discuss your application for Associate membership, and Marilyn Kennedy (the Cluny focaliser) said they certainly would look at the situation. Afterwards she wouldn't say to me what the outcome was, just saying I would be informed. Other people I worked with felt something positive in this, but I found out later that Eric was part of the meeting, so the result would be the same, obviously. There is a tiny bit in this week's *Rainbow Bridge* just saying the meeting had happened and you had been sent a letter. I went back to Marilyn saying obviously a decision had been made, and asking when would I be informed? She said there would be a meeting between myself and Eric. When this still didn't happen, I asked her again. She said she didn't want to be involved at all and it was up to Eric to talk to me. This time she said the meeting was in fact just a courtesy meeting, whatever that means. So I have been waiting for this to happen. I saw Eric twice and he made no move to speak to me, so I asked him when this meeting would be. He said he had not asked for a meeting as he felt he had nothing to 'clear' with me, so I said I *did* want a meeting—I don't know when this will be, he hasn't let me know. I have also contacted Loren to ask to see him too, but have not heard yet when this might occur. It has made me really angry at the injustice of the situation.

"I saw Stan Stanfield (a senior staff member); he wanted to know the sequence of events and I put the necessary points to him. He felt the situation was 'unfortunate' and that it had been caused by misunderstandings on both sides, regardless of the facts. He said he had neither the time or the

energy to become involved in this issue, just as Marilyn had said. . . . When I had time to look over it all again I felt the anger rise up in me at the injustice of the situation. . . . I saw the whole thing in a flash, with what Eric represented and the people involved making the choice to align themselves with him and what he represented. I had all this emotion and nowhere to direct it."

The following day, a friend of mine arranged to see Gemma and to show her the letter sent to me by Loren Stewart, focaliser of Personnel Administration Group. She had still not been informed of its content, and appeared very shocked and distraught when she read it. The letter was dated 9th September, 1991, and arrived on September 12th, the day before Gemma saw it. Stewart stated: "I do not feel it is appropriate for the Foundation to create a forum for an open meeting, and the Administration Group which coordinates the Foundation has also agreed with this. . . . As far as I am concerned our dealings with you are complete." The end result of Gemma's extreme distress was a scene in the Cluny Hill College dining room in which Eric Franciscus again declined to speak with her, and she released her stress by slapping his face and publicly pouring out what she thought of him. She then telephoned me in a state bordering on collapse. I immediately contacted the retired medical practitioner who had been present at the meeting between Gemma, Loren Stewart, Eric Franciscus and Jill Brierley, and who at once went to the College, only to find that Gemma had just left for the Park at Findhorn. Whilst at the Park, Gemma insisted on seeing Eileen Caddy, to whom, in great distress, she communicated what had just happened, and asked why Eileen had done nothing at any step to correct this situation. Eileen listened but gave no explanation. She merely said she thought Gemma was unsuited to the Foundation, and took the attitude that if she was unhappy, she should leave. Her complete lack of concern regarding the facts of this matter upset Gemma even more. On her return she found her doctor friend awaiting her. Such was the extremity of Gemma's

condition that the friend took her into her own home overnight. The next morning Gemma returned to the College to collect her belongings, then left for the home of her parents, relinquishing her Foundation membership.

As a consequence of these events, the doctor friend who had helped Gemma, wrote a critical letter (dated 14th September, 1991) to Loren Stewart, in which she stated:

"I must strongly protest, as a medical practitioner, at the extreme stress suffered by Gemma Whibley through the prolonged and non-confrontational tactics used to evade her legitimate questioning of the defamatory remarks made about Kate Thomas, her former teacher, and specifically those made to her personally by Eric Franciscus, whom you have all supported despite his clearly untruthful accounts of what actually transpired. Such tactics are known to all sociologists and are fully documented in research material on group and cult behaviour. I took Gemma to my own home on Friday evening as she was obviously suffering acute shock and emotional stress as a result of her further approach to both Eric Franciscus and Eileen Caddy on learning of the content of your irrational and dismissive letter to Kate Thomas. What you have collectively subjected this young woman to (and I include Eileen Caddy) is an infringement of the basic human rights which one would justifiably expect to operate in your organisation, made infinitely worse, in my opinion, by the fact that you purport to promote spiritual values, inner development, unbiased attitudes and unconditional love. I therefore question your rights to publicise yourselves in this unsubstantiated manner.

"As a long-standing member of the Scientific and Medical Network and other research bodies, I consider the matter serious enough to take further. I would appreciate your comments by letter on these issues before I do so. In my view, apologies to Kate Thomas and Gemma Whibley are in the first order of priorities, and I suggest you set this immediately in motion."

Copies of this letter were circulated to six senior staff

focalisers in the Findhorn Foundation. These included Judith Bone, acting Director; Alex Walker (Trustee); Liz Whittam, CAP co-focaliser; Tim Hildebrandt, overall Park focaliser, and Marilyn Kennedy, overall focaliser of Cluny Hill College. Not one of the six responded.

On October 1st Loren Stewart replied to the above quoted letter. His response was carefully worded and bore the inscription WITHOUT PREJUDICE in capital letters at the head of the page. The content was wholly unyielding, and totally evaded the issues that needed to be addressed:

"I have received your letter of September 14th, 1991. I regret that you have come to these conclusions about our organisation.

"As I have stated in my letter to Kate Thomas, September 9th, there is nothing more that the Foundation feels it can, or should do."

In view of the non-sharing and totalitarian attitude of Eric Franciscus towards Gemma [only part of which has been included in these excerpts], it is that much less convincing to find him advertised as a focaliser in a project that emphasises: "A commitment to one's own spiritual growth as well as a willingness to share about it and to support others in their growth is essential." This statement comes from the September 1991–April 1992 Guest Programme of the Foundation, which describes (p. 27) a seven-week tour of India to be conducted by Eric and two other members of the Foundation. The tour is stated to be "designed as an inner adventure as well as an outer journey," and is the result "of many requests to experience the treasures of Mother India in the safe setting of a group" (p. 27). One hopes that everyone will be more safely supported than Gemma was in the sharing she was so coldly and consistently denied. Perhaps the fee of £2,500 specified for this tour will encourage Eric's entrepreneurial disposition in a more sharing and supportive direction than he has exhibited on his home territory.

[When the proposal was put forward on September 4th

1991 that an open meeting should be held within the Foundation so that Thomas could confront her detractors democratically, i.e., face-to-face, this was categorically refused by Loren Stewart, despite the fact that he and Jill Brierley had earlier agreed (at the meeting with Gemma Whibley of August 15th) that a meeting of some kind would "clear" the situation. According to Gemma Whibley: "In all my dealings with Loren, he continually avoided the actual issue itself. He kept stressing the Associate membership, rather than what it was really all about (i.e., the vilification of Kate). It was only when the question of an open meeting was put to him—when he couldn't avoid it, that he said, no. And he didn't then, or at any other time, give me a good reason why, except that he thought it could cause a blaze"].

(A complete record of the observations made by Kate Thomas of the Findhorn Foundation community, along with her comments upon the New Age counterculture, can be found in her autobiography *The Destiny Challenge: A Record of Spiritual Experience and Observation*, Forres: New Frequency Press, 1992, pp. 898–1003).

Biographical note.

Kate Thomas, of British nationality, was born in Cambridge in 1928. She is the author of an autobiographical trilogy⁸⁹ detailing the spontaneous and sequential development from childhood of mystical insights. Her books include the description of her contact in the 1960's with the silent spiritual teacher, Meher Baba.⁹⁰ In 1966, she helped pioneer the acceptance of health foods in Britain and also assisted the introduction to the public of Lady Muriel Dowding's "Beauty without Cruelty" cosmetics. In 1984, at the suggestion of Professor Glen Schaefer (world famous physicist, ecologist, biologist, and ornithologist), she founded The Cambridge Research Centre for Metaphysical and Evolutionary Studies for students interested in experiential metaphysics, and the necessary requirements for authentic spiritual growth. Kate Thomas now resides in Scotland and is currently writing a book on the subject of "altered states of consciousness," in which it is understood that emphases are made quite contrary to those of the New Age.

5. "For all its 30 years . . ."

Relations between the village of Findhorn and the Foundation have always been somewhat strained, and many villagers view the Foundation as an alien culture which seriously threatens the "traditional" life and values of the village. Some of the villagers fear a "cultural colonisation" by the many Foundation supporters moving into the area, and thus feel a need to assert their seemingly "threatened" cultural identity. This fear is expressed in the claim of the villagers to have an exclusive right to the name of Findhorn. The word "Findhorn" has increasingly become a subject of contention and social division between the two communities. "Villagers object to the name Findhorn being used by the Foundation," wrote Alan Forbes in *The Scotsman*, commenting that they had "asked repeatedly, but without success, for the organisation to change its title."⁹¹

In May 1990, according to Elizabeth Taylor of the *Forres Gazette*, "anger erupted at Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council's meeting as the bitter debate over the Findhorn Foundation's use of the name Findhorn bubbled over once again."

"At one point," wrote Taylor, "council members looked as if they were verging on a straight slanging match over who could consider themselves to be a 'local' and who was definitely an 'outsider.'"

"Calls were made for the 'new age' community to change its name," and Chairman of the Council, Mrs. Joan Miller, was said to have declared to Foundation members present, "You are not in Findhorn and have nothing to do with

Findhorn!" The *Gazette* reported Mrs. Miller's complaint that "people who were born and bred in the village were tired of finding themselves thought of as living on a caravan site."

Addressing Foundation Director Craig Gibsone, Findhorn resident Group Capt. Bonney "asked why the word Findhorn had to be in the Foundation's name at all. 'To my mind you could change your name, and become the Caddy Foundation for instance. Please divorce yourself geographically from the village.'"⁹²

The conflict had been sparked by an article read largely by Australian and New Zealand expatriates entitled "Highland Hippies," which had referred to the Foundation as "Findhorn" throughout. Residents of the village of Findhorn clearly did not wish to be associated with their neighbours down the road—the so-called Highland Hippies. "A strong body of local opinion resents the confusion between the 'new age' community and the village," wrote Taylor.

In July 1992 the Findhorn Foundation, who were then the subject of increasing local criticism, finally "conceded a need to 'build bridges' in a bid to heal a growing rift with local communities."⁹³ An open meeting was therefore planned for Findhorn village residents, "intended as a 'bridge-building' exercise between the Foundation and its neighbours, after trust between the two was damaged by a series of revelations about Foundation development plans."⁹⁴

On a Sunday afternoon in August 1992, "dialogue opened between the two communities who lay claim to the name of Findhorn," reported the *Forres Gazette*.⁹⁵ "In the Findhorn Foundation's Universal Hall, a panel of senior staff members from the New Age community faced an audience of nearly 300 people to answer questions on the future of the Foundation—and how its expansion plans would affect the traditional village of Findhorn."

In what was described as an "emotional debate" by the *Gazette*, "the move was variously interpreted afterwards as a sign of co-operation between the two communities, or as a mark of the distrust that has emerged between the two

sides, in a row fuelled over the last two months by revelations in the press of Foundation expansion plans and by the way the New Age community has treated its neighbours."

One impartial observer who attended the bridge-building exercise, Elizabeth Stevenson, wrote a letter afterwards to the editor of the *Forres Gazette* that encapsulated the very real dilemma facing the two communities of Findhorn:

"As a long-time observer—mostly sympathetic, sometimes critical—of the Findhorn Foundation, may I share my reactions to having wandered unwittingly into the hornet's nest of the meeting on Sunday last between Findhorn villagers and Foundation members.

"I was immediately struck by the polarisation of the groups. What I saw and felt were what must be years of stored up resentment on the part of some of the villagers and the naive attitude on the part of some of the Foundation members about being a spiritual community dedicated to love. I say naive because as long as the Foundation's closest neighbours feel so much resentment, even rage, something is seriously awry. . . .

"For all its 30 years, the Foundation members are newcomers. It behoves them to be considerate and thoughtful neighbours for the continuing good not only of the wider community, but of the Foundation itself."⁹⁶

Another observer wrote:

"I attended the recent meeting at the Findhorn (?) Foundation to 'clear the air' between the local population and the community members. Despite being carefully orchestrated, the Foundation just could not hold up under scrutiny.

"Their so-called caring, sharing society was exposed for the sham it is, and their policy of good neighbour relations was shown to be nothing but hypocrisy.

"The members who represented the Foundation on the floor never attempted to answer a question in a straightforward manner, choosing instead to ramble on at length until the point was well and truly dodged."⁹⁷

A further proposal for "bridge-building" came from Gram-

pian Regional Councillor, Robbie Laing, who suggested that: "A panel should be set up representing the Findhorn Foundation and residents of the old village of Findhorn."⁹⁸

"The open meeting was too large and cumbersome," said Councillor Laing. "The audience could not always hear what people had to say, and what emerged was an almost random expression of opinions.

"From my point of view that meeting merely emphasised the great divide between the two communities.

"I would think it would be more profitable if twelve representatives of each of the two sides calmly sat down round a table. The local community council and the Foundation could both appoint representatives."

A Foundation spokesperson thought that Councillor Laing's suggestion was "a very sensible idea," and added, "We are having a couple of meetings early this week to look at that, and at a range of suggestions, to see what is the best thing to do."⁹⁹

A few weeks later the Findhorn Foundation invited nine local residents from the village of Findhorn "to join a 'Liaison Panel' to discuss troubled relationships" between the two communities.¹⁰⁰

However, the move was immediately "condemned as 'arrogant and presumptuous' by one of the invitees," namely Douglas Norman.

Mr. Norman said that his "first impression was that the situation which exists is being dealt with by the usual arrogance of the 'New Age' community."

Another invitee, Mrs. Joan Miller, "said she agreed that the Foundation had presumed too much in calling the liaison meeting."

What had caused so much offence amongst the village residents was that "Foundation staff members and Trustees [had] . . . sat down together and decided to take the initiative to form the 'Liaison Panel.' Names were chosen from the local community, and letters of invitation to a preliminary meeting at Cluny Hill College on October 6 were sent

out"—the villagers, however, had not been consulted on the matter!

Even Councillor Robbie Laing, who issued the original call for the panel and was among the nine invitees, had to concede that "this panel was not democratically elected."

It was further reported the following week that six out of nine of the invitees met to discuss the letter. "Following their meeting they issued a statement in which they said that while they welcome continuing dialogue between the village and the Foundation, they do not believe the proper forum for discussion is on Foundation premises between individuals selected by the Foundation."¹⁰¹

News of the Findhorn Foundation's 30th anniversary received a somewhat mixed reception from the media. John Hancox, of the *Sunday Telegraph*, rhetorically asked: "Are they a bunch of eccentric New Age travellers, threatening civilised life in the Scottish countryside they have invaded? Or are they a hard-working community with exciting ideas about agriculture and industry?"¹⁰² Informed readers, however, knew that the Foundation was in fact neither.

The Foundation had expressed an uncharitable, hard line attitude towards New Age travellers, a supposedly spiritually inferior grouping with whom the Foundation certainly had no desire to be associated. Alex Walker, a business consultant and former Trustee of the Findhorn Foundation, has written, "As far as we know these groups do not espouse any spiritual cause at all."¹⁰³ The Foundation Press relations officer Janette Campbell "thought that groups of people known as New Age travellers . . . did not come under the Foundation's definition of what the New Age means."¹⁰⁴ Yet recent research¹⁰⁵ has revealed that some New Age travellers are very much spiritually inclined, as evidenced in the following reflection by one such traveller:

"I've always thought that there was something else apart from the material world that we're brought up with in school. We're consuming too much. I can't cope with that. I take myself away from the world of men and seek the kingdom

of God.”¹⁰⁶ A sentiment that the Findhorn Foundation would once have understood. (The present writer, nevertheless, is strongly critical of the unlawful behaviour, including drug-use,¹⁰⁷ evidenced by the more anarchic New Age travellers).

For some New Age travellers, spirituality also translates into socio-political action and concern. A far cry indeed from the Foundation, who in the past had even declined to take a stance on the issue of nuclear disarmament.¹⁰⁸ In the statement made on nuclear disarmament, a Foundation spokesperson announced: “We see our own contribution . . . as an educational and spiritual one rather than in the area of direct social action.”¹⁰⁹ Two commentators on the above had nonetheless astutely observed, “This avoidance of endorsement was occasioned in part by Findhorn’s large international contingent and its consequent concern to keep the immigration authorities happy.”¹¹⁰

In a 1993 Press release the Findhorn Foundation attempted to distance itself entirely from the ‘New Age’ tag. This followed national Press coverage of the tragic happenings involving a religious cult in Waco, Texas, and was also due in part to a report from the Church of Scotland study group. According to the *Forres Gazette*, “the study group was set up by the Kirk’s board of social responsibility and warns that the New Age movement may be displaying dangerous characteristics associated with religious cults.”¹¹¹ The report was said to have stressed “that the greatest danger may lie in regarding the spectrum of the New Age as being ‘too silly for words’ ”¹¹²—a mistake that too many academics are inclined to make.

In his *Sunday Telegraph* article, John Hancox described the Foundation as “a monastery of the New Age religion,” taking his cue from Isobel Lamont, a Foundation representative who said: “More and more people are searching for a spiritual and emotional truth. This is something that people would [once] go to abbeys to find. But we accept people of any faith or none.”¹¹³ Yet, commenting on the current sexual mores of the “monastery” he helped to create, five times

married Peter Caddy lamented, when interviewed by Hancox: "Things have changed hugely in the 30 years of [the] Findhorn [Foundation]. There never was free love allowed here. You could not sleep together unless you were married and that has changed, as in the world outside."¹¹⁴

The sexually permissive preoccupations of the Foundation were reflected in their community magazine, *One Earth*, which devoted a whole issue to the subject of Sex in spring 1994.¹¹⁵ In that issue Foundation staff member Michael Forster—formerly a cult member of the Emin Foundation¹¹⁶—wrote that after encountering a book entitled *The Art of Sexual Ecstasy* by Margo Anand, he "could hardly wait!" and "wanted to find someone who also wanted to boldly go where no couple, or not that many couples, had gone before." Forster continues: "It was then that a woman whom I had met on a Psychosynthesis course invited me to stay at her home in Santa Cruz, California . . ." He then boldly informs the reader that he "set off for California, armed only with a suitcase full of shorts, T-shirts, condoms and a negative STD test." In California, wrote the gratified Forster, "'premature ejaculation' came to mean making love for less than an hour. And we felt we were only just beginning."¹¹⁷

Also in the same issue was a full-page advertisement from the Foundation-based Phoenix Centre, a bookshop and mail order service. The advert read: "For all those interested in honouring their sexuality as an integral part of their spiritual journey we offer a comprehensive selection of books, magazines and audio tapes on sexuality and related subjects." The material in question ranged "from simple 'how to have an orgasm' to highly evolved Tantric [sexual] practices . . ."¹¹⁸

Under the caption "Call for charity inquiry on Findhorn group," Alan Forbes of *The Scotsman*¹¹⁹ announced that "the Scottish Charities Office is being asked to investigate the Findhorn Foundation." The following day, the Foundation's 30th Anniversary (in 1992), there appeared another article from Forbes, which raised the question, "Is the Findhorn dream turning sour after 30 happy years in Moray?"¹²⁰

The Scotsman, along with other newspapers, had noted that "since summer, things at the Foundation have gone wrong at an alarming rate." These things, readers were informed, included:

- "A planned share issue of £5 million to develop a 'planetary village,' which would have meant the Foundation acquiring land in Findhorn itself, was dropped following public pressure.
- "An application by a Foundation supporter to create a £500,000 alternative holistic health centre to cater for the community's alternative style has also been abandoned. Every GP in Forres wrote to a local paper saying they would have nothing to do with it.
- "In the summer a book by a former member [Kate Thomas] claimed that the Foundation 'presents as tools for spiritual advancement therapies designed for the emotionally unbalanced, the socially unintegrated and the mentally disturbed.'"121
- "A call for the Scottish Charities Office to investigate the Foundation's charitable status was made by one prominent Findhorn villager."122
- And, "In September, it was revealed that a mail-order business had lost £130,000."123

A more detailed article about the Foundation came from the pen of Richard Boston of *The Guardian*,¹²⁴ whose discerning observations must have caused acute embarrassment among the Foundation's membership.

The "name of Findhorn," wrote Boston, "is misleading. The Findhorn Foundation has nothing to do with the village of Findhorn. In so far as there are relations between the two they range from mutual suspicion to downright hostility. Furthermore, the Foundation isn't even in Findhorn but in Forres and Kinloss, next to the Nato base."

Boston's article was concerned with the reality of the contemporary Foundation, rather than the semi-mythical "extraordinary Scottish community on the Moray Firth where people talk to plants with amazing results; where vegetable

and flower gardens are animated by angelic forms; where forty-pound cabbages and eight-foot delphiniums grow, where roses bloom in the snow; a land where nothing is impossible and legends are reborn."¹²⁵ The reality was a stark contrast. Boston commented that the Findhorn Foundation "has grown to be a big business valued at millions of pounds, the money having come from gifts, trading and course fees. It has 150 members, about twice as many associates of one kind or another and about 8,000 visitors a year. Women outnumber men by about three to one. They're mostly middle-aged, middle-class, and of American, Australian or north European origin. There are few English and very few Scots. Many of the men are former addicts of drugs or alcohol. They are much-divorced; Eileen Caddy has been married twice, Peter Caddy's present wife is his fifth. As is usual in such communities, not only do members change sexual partners but it is also not uncommon to change sexual preferences; there is at least one case of an actual change of sex."

He observed that the Foundation membership whom he met "were polite, a bit distant, smug in the manner common to those who have found the truth, not terribly bright, cunning rather than clever, uninformed about the outside world, and gullible. They are evidently in poor health physically and mentally: otherwise there would be no need for the enormous array of therapies—from acupuncture and aromatherapy to every imaginable spiritual treatment."

"The Findhorn Foundation," continued Boston, "has been described as a spiritual supermarket. The shelves of the Foundation's Phoenix Bookshop offer, among other things, astrology, alchemy, the occult, Tarot, I Ching, King Arthur, Nostradamus, Alexander technique, aromatherapy, reflexology, martial arts, the paranormal, dowsing, reincarnation, and sexual abuse."

This journalist made a special visit to the "Findhorn" area to ascertain what was happening. "Quite what these New Agers believe is impossible to say since they express themselves in psychobabble," he wrote. He was unimpressed by

the jargon, and far more interested in why a certain book had been ruthlessly repressed by the medieval standards of censorship in evidence at the Foundation.

Richard Boston had obtained a copy of the local Forres book *The Destiny Challenge* authored by Kate Thomas. He observed, however, that when questioned about the contents of this volume, "Foundation spokespeople say the book is unreadable, which is why they haven't read it (or claim not to have read it). Certainly the book is long but I didn't have the slightest difficulty in reading the relevant chapters. I found them highly entertaining, far more readable and far more comprehensible than any Findhorn Foundation literature."

The following year (1993), some more disturbing allegations about the Foundation came to light. Ian McKerron, in a *Scottish Daily Express* investigation,¹²⁶ asserted: "For 30 years the Findhorn Foundation on the Moray Firth has been seen as an international centre of spirituality and social harmony, the undisputed spearhead of the New Age movement and forerunner to a Brave New World.

"But behind the peaceful facade lurks turmoil: A community not only at odds with the outside world but at war with itself. Ex-members talk of terror campaigns and bullying against those who dare question beliefs.

"There are also claims of casual sex and drug use in what was heralded as an ideal community. Now, bitter in-fighting and a lurch towards commercialism threatens to destroy the dream of founder Eileen Caddy."

Ian McKerron then introduced a disturbing scenario from the experience of an ex-member of the Foundation:

"The frenzied banging on the door signalled terror for Eva Haden. Outside her caravan a man, his face contorted with rage, was demanding entry and bawling he had come to cut off the electricity.

"Eva, protectively cradling the youngest of her three children, warned she would call the police unless he left. He did, but threatened: 'You're nothing but a troublemaker. I'll

be back.’”

McKerron observed that “the incident would have been unpleasant at any caravan park. But the fact that it took place at the Findhorn Foundation—perceived throughout the world as a centre of peace and love—and that the man was one of its leading spiritual leaders, makes it all the more ugly and shocking.”

When interviewed, Eva Haden said “their claim to be a spiritual community is a complete con.” She added, “the place is run by a dictatorship; anyone who steps out of line or questions their rule is subjected to a concerted campaign of harassment and terror.”

Other disillusioned former members of the Foundation who talked to McKerron claimed:

- “People considered suitable to be residents and teachers in the community are systematically brainwashed and conditioned.
- “Drugs are in common use and tolerated by leaders despite a strict rule forbidding them.
- “Casual sex is not only tolerated but encouraged and adults and small children romp together naked in the communal sauna.
- “Alternative therapy techniques branded potentially life-threatening by doctors are widely practised and taught.
- “Residents of the caravan park are subjected to ‘unchristian’ tactics to force them out if they are considered undesirable.”

One of the disaffected former members interviewed, John Montgomery, told Ian McKerron that: “When people come here they give up everything. Then if they don’t conform the hierarchy simply spits them out and they are left with nothing.”

Montgomery added: “These people [the Foundation staff] can appear to be full of spirituality, love and caring. But scratch the surface and there is a terrifying viciousness underneath.”

“Critics,” wrote McKerron, “are convinced the Foundation’s

crisis stems from its shift to what is regarded by many as 'naked commercialism.' As a registered educational charity, the Foundation enjoys certain tax advantages. . . .

"It has an annual turnover in excess of £2 million derived mainly from course fees, rents and sales. And the Foundation has benefited from donations worth hundreds of thousands.

"Assets are estimated to be worth between £10 million and £15 million which include the caravan park, several private houses in Findhorn and nearby Forres, as well as several former mansions and a large hotel."

Readers were informed that the commercial side of the Foundation is run by "New Findhorn Directions, a company headed by Dutchman George Goudsmit." When commenting upon the allegations of caravan park residents, Goudsmit admitted, "Yes, we have threatened to evict people from the caravans. If they won't pay their rent what do you expect? When you are running a business you have to run it in a business-like manner."

The *Forres Gazette* later confirmed Ian McKerron's account, and reported that: "Amid allegations of broken windows, poor sanitation and leaking roofs, some tenants of the Findhorn Foundation's Bayside Caravan Park are accusing their landlords of most 'unspiritual' and 'ungodlike' behaviour."¹²⁷

The same newspaper duly reported the unflattering episode in which a mother of two "accused the Foundation of poor management after she faced freezing temperatures in her caravan following a refusal to allow her a £36 gas cylinder on two days credit."¹²⁸ "Roan Duzak, 42, a former lecturer at York University," reported the *Gazette*, "says she was told she would have to 'pay up front' for any further supplies of the bottled gas just days before Christmas. Only a whipround among friends at the caravan site, troubled with a stream of complaints from residents since the summer, saved her and her two small children Renja, two-and-a-half, and Daniel, four-and-a-half years old, from suffering freezing temperatures in the run-up to Christmas."¹²⁹

6. "£415—to learn breathing"

Interactional therapies that use various group exercises and techniques are an integral part of the Findhorn Foundation's "educational" programmes, and in many respects the Foundation can be viewed as a therapeutic rather than an overtly religious community. Some persons who have participated in the programmes, courses, and workshops offered, claim that as a result of their involvement they feel happier, more able to relate successfully with others, and clearer about their lives. Others, however, have had more disturbing encounters. Over the years the Foundation has played host to a number of commercial New Age psychotherapies ranging from Gestalt, EST, and Psychosynthesis, to the more recent Process Oriented Psychology of Arnold Mindell. However, none of the abovementioned therapies have been as controversial as Holotropic Breathwork™, created by Dr. Stanislav Grof.

This New Age therapy was first introduced into Scotland by the Findhorn Foundation in October 1989. The following year, the Director of the Foundation, Craig Gibsone, announced in the members internal newsletter *Rainbow Bridge* (26th April, 1990) that the Foundation was seriously considering doing a three-year training programme in Holotropic Breathwork™. This was said to involve approximately 10 Foundation staff members, 10 Russians and Eastern Europeans, and 20 people from the rest of Europe. The proposed programme would "take place every six months for 10 days," wrote Gibsone.

Undeterred by opposition and the concern voiced by some members, the three-year facilitator training programme for

Holotropic Breathwork™, along with a planned series of workshops for the general public, went ahead. However, unforeseen problems connected with the intrusive nature of these workshops soon emerged and, according to the Foundation Education Branch Minutes for 6th April 1991, there was "a delighted sigh of relief" when the Foundation's sister organisation, Newbold House, announced it was "going to take it on" within their precincts. Nevertheless, the original three-year programme with Grof Transpersonal Training Inc., was still scheduled to be held within the Foundation's Universal Hall Arts Centre. At this venue, Holotropic Breathwork™ gained virtual pride of place over other events.

It is a strange fact that the first critical published reference to the Foundation and Holotropic Breathwork™ passed completely unnoticed by the organisation under discussion. The Foundation elite were determined to ignore contra-indications to their assumptions about beneficial therapy, and were not serious readers of literature which lacked a New Age tag. Kate Thomas favourably cited the relevant book in a footnote which appears not to have been noticed by those staff members who described her work as "unreadable" to literate journalists like Richard Boston. In his critique of Holotropic Breathwork™ published in 1991, Kevin Shepherd appropriately stated that, at the Findhorn Foundation, "scholarship is not encouraged, partly owing to the influence of Dr. Grof."¹³⁰ The Shepherd versus Grof issue served to dramatise the contention that alternative therapy leads to an obscurantism in respect of moral, scientific, and spiritual priorities. The Foundation have proved the point made by remaining in total ignorance of Shepherd's contribution for several years afterwards (as the present writer was able to ascertain), indeed until the time of writing this book.

The ongoing discord amongst the Foundation membership over the commercial practice and promotion of Holotropic therapy was an internal event unknown to the general public. It was not until July 1992 that there appeared the first critical reference to Holotropic Breathwork™ in a newspaper.

As a former Associate member of the Findhorn Foundation, with some knowledge of the internal discord, I felt obliged to contribute some due information.

My letter appeared in *The Northern Scot* under the heading "Question of charitable foundation." Some interested readers learnt that the phrase "Holotropic Breathwork" referred to an "unconventional therapy formulated in the USA by Dr. Stanislav Grof, the controversial arch-advocate for the use of LSD in psychotherapy..."¹³¹

The disputing letter went on to inform: "Such was the concern amongst the Foundation membership about the 'disruptive effect' within the Universal Hall Arts Centre—by those undergoing this therapy—that a letter of complaint appeared in the Foundation's internal weekly newsletter [*Rainbow Bridge*] commenting that 'It is absolutely not possible to keep the Visitor's Centre open to visitors while such workshops are going on. The noise level and the type of noise do not give an accurate impression of the Foundation to people arriving for the first time. It is also impossible for us to work there in those conditions.'"

As to the type of noise, I was able to further inform readers that this "included screaming, vomiting, hysterics, and loud music." I also felt obliged to state that the "physiological and psychological effects—which also included hallucinogenic experiences—were symptoms of a biochemical disturbance of the brain; deliberately induced cerebral hypoxia through abnormally increased speed and depth of breathing (hyper-ventilation) over prolonged periods."¹³²

At the time in question, the Universal Hall Arts Centre (i.e., the Holotropic venue) was already the subject of contention due to complaints about the non-universality of its choice of programmes, which, according to one informed critic, "in practice tends to be coy and select, focused heavily on an 'in-group' of Foundation members..." That critical observation was made in a letter to the editor of *The Northern Scot* by John P. Greenaway,¹³³ and was in reference to Grampian regional councillor Robbie Laing's public "chal-

lenge" to the Findhorn Foundation to list the benefits it created for the local community.¹³⁴ The councillor had felt that there was a need to ensure that any future public money going to the Foundation should be seen to be of benefit not just to the Foundation itself, but also to the wider community. The Foundation's attempt to defend its place in the local community with arguments such as, "Our recycled toilet rolls—and we go through thousands—come from Ardersier,"¹³⁵ did not serve to convince critics of the Foundation's benefit to the wider community.

Concerning the Universal Hall Arts Centre, Mr. Greenaway wrote: "Despite receiving £70,000 worth, around £200,000 at today's prices, of public money in the late 1970's, via the old Highlands and Islands Development Board, the Universal Hall does not advertise its programmes regularly in the 'Entertainments' pages of the local press. Nor does it—or the Foundation on its behalf—produce a regular programme leaflet of events to come, for the local general public . . ." The writer concluded: "It all leaves me wondering what the adjective 'Universal' means. What, after all, is the use of fancy, conceptual talk about a 'planetary village,' or of peppering conversation with the adjective 'spiritual,' in the absence of a happy relationship with the neighbour at the gate?"¹³⁶

The noted non-universality of the Universal Hall echoed the complaint of senior long-term Foundation member Katherine Inglis. In her letter about Holotropic Breathwork™ published in *Rainbow Bridge* (May 3rd 1990), Inglis lamented, "We advertise in our Guest Brochure that 'The Visitor's Centre is open 9–5 Monday to Saturday and 2–5 Sundays.' People travel from all over the world and maybe only have one day to spend here. How do we tell them we are closed when we've advertised open. This [H.B.] also affects the opening times of the cafe. The question of the best mutual use of the Hall needs to be well considered."

A more revealing and candid insight into the wider "disruptive effect" of Holotropic Breathwork™ was contained in

the next paragraph of her letter:

"I have another concern related to Holotropic Breathing and other workshops. I see so much energy going into these 'growth' events. Yet it is not possible to build without a proper foundation. If the groundwork of the community were solid I would feel less concern but there are areas that are totally wobbly. Homecare and maintenance in the Park [Foundation] are virtually non-existent and there are certain areas that are just a mess."

The disruptive nature of Dr. Grof's therapy was later confirmed by Foundation Director Craig Gibsone (a Holotropic Breathwork™ trainee), who had to concede that holotropic breathing "upsets our daily rhythms such as cooking shifts, cleanup rotas, work departments, etc., . . ." ¹³⁷ This, however, made no difference to Mr. Gibsone's active promotion of the Breathwork on Foundation premises such as the Universal Hall.

Another Holotropic Breathwork™ trainee and Foundation member, Dr. David Mead, opted to treat disclosures in the local newspapers as an unwarranted critique of an infallible technique (i.e., the Breathwork). He was evidently incensed by what he considered to be an "emotionally-charged and inflammatory side-swipe at Holotropic Breathwork" and the "attempt to establish Findhorn Foundation guilt by association." In a published letter to the editor of *The Northern Scot*, he further complained that the "heavy-handed and unwarranted slur on the professional qualities of Dr. Grof are grossly unfair and ill-informed," and went on to preach to critics of the Breathwork, asking them "to consider that in the process of self discovery there are many ways to that end, and that in our spiritual development there are many paths to God. . . all of us humans are trying our best to find our way to personal fulfilment and to God in the best way we know how . . ." ¹³⁸

In response to Dr. Mead's homily, a second informative letter about the Breathwork appeared in *The Northern Scot*:

"In reply to Dr. Mead's letter of endorsement for Holotropic

Breathwork™ therapy and his diatribe against myself, I will attempt to present some relevant facts to your readers that were conveniently omitted by Dr. Mead in his fervour. . . .

" . . . my comments concerning the questionable charitable status of the Findhorn Foundation relate to purported 'spiritual' practices that operate as commercial interests, practices which Dr. Mead supports and financially benefits from. Rather than be a salesperson of 'spiritual discovery' like Dr. Mead, I do not profess a 'way,' let alone attempt to sell one, but have merely sought to draw public attention to some of the unpublicised anomalies that flourish under the umbrella of the Findhorn Foundation's charitable status. . . . Also, Dr. Mead should have been astute enough to note that I used the comments of one of the Foundation's members in my letter, comments which, by the way, Dr. Mead does not refute—it was not I who complained about the screaming, vomiting, hysterics, and loud music, and who could not work in the Universal Hall as a result.

"As to Dr. Mead's assertion that 'Holotropic Breathwork™ has been consistently documented,' Dr. Stanislov Grof has written: 'Our own experience with this technique has been limited to experiential workshops lasting up to four weeks. We have not had the opportunity to subject it to rigorous evaluation in controlled clinical studies.' This is, of course, because the technique is not employed in a clinical context, but a commercial one, as the Foundation's November 7–13 'module in Holotropic Breathwork' for £415 per person confirms.

"I note that Dr. Mead evades the question of the effects of Holotropic Breathwork™. Let me then quote from his article in Issue 4, Autumn 1991, of *One Earth* magazine, which describes his own participation in this extreme therapy: 'The music was powerful and I soon found myself running through a cold, grey, northern forest howling like a wolf—being a wolf. Then there was snarling and fighting (with the facilitators and my sitter) until I collapsed . . . I then became aware of a demonic face in front of me and about to con-

sume me. I fought this off but then allowed the image to become part of me ...' I will not subject the reader to further simulated LSD experiences—through the technique of Holotropic Breathwork™—undergone by Dr. Mead in his hallucinatory quest for 'spiritual discovery.'"¹³⁹ There was no further reply from Dr. Mead.

Indirectly related to the debate about the Breathwork was the ongoing controversy surrounding the proposed Holistic Health Centre. A publicity exercise to influence public opinion was announced in August 1992 by Dr. Cornelia Fellner along with her publicity officer, Katy Lloyd. "We want the involvement of the local population," said Dr. Fellner, who added, "The information they bring us will be even more valuable than the data found in the planned market survey."¹⁴⁰

The idea behind the Holistic Health Centre was "to have ordinary doctors working with, and alongside, a range of complementary therapists..." reported *The Northern Scot*.¹⁴¹ However, local GPs tended to be resistant to the idea that therapists are complementary to serious health practice.

Retired GP Dr. Sylvia J. Darke, a local Forres resident, former advisor to the World Health Organisation, and member of the Scientific and Medical Network, wrote a critical letter to *The Northern Scot* which seriously questioned the so-called "health programmes" supported by Dr. Fellner, and which also sought to present to the public further information on Holotropic Breathwork therapy. Dr. Darke wrote:

"Unfortunately I was unable to attend the open meeting on Tuesday, August 11th, to hear Dr. Fellner and her publicity officer talk about the proposal to erect an holistic health centre in the grounds of Minton House.

"May I therefore take this opportunity to use the forum of your columns to add my support to queries about such a centre and also comment upon the serious matter of holotropic breathwork therapy.

"I am not one of the doctors who are against the idea that

medical practices of long-standing repute, such as osteopathy, homeopathy, chiropractice and herbalism, are, and should be, complementary to orthodox medicine and could therefore be included in a health centre. The legitimate practitioners of the above would have studied for at least three or four years at reputable, nationally recognised teaching establishments.

"However, I am strongly against the type of unorthodox practices that are promoted by Dr. Fellner in her capacity as co-ordinator for the Holistic Health Department of the Findhorn Foundation. These anomalies include Shiatsu, Neuro-linguistic programming, Reiki, Californian massage, reflexology, Neo-Reichian therapy etc., etc. I would hardly term these as complementary to serious health practice, though certainly perhaps commercially lucrative for 'New Age' centres. Does Dr. Fellner propose to incorporate such practices in her envisaged holistic health centre?

"Which brings me to the matter of holotropic breathwork therapy, introduced from California to the Findhorn New Agers by Dr. Stanislav Grof. Few readers will be aware that this highly controversial therapy is now commercially promoted as a technique 'ideally suited for those seeking greater psychological opening as well as an expanded mystical and spiritual dimension in their lives.'

"'Workshops' are now available to the general public run by persons connected with, or resident within, the Findhorn Foundation—which is promoting, from November 7–13, 'Grof Transpersonal Training,' an enterprise which can hardly be termed 'transpersonal' in view of the substantial £415 per person fee for the week.

"It is known that holotropic breathwork therapy can simulate the psychological effects of an LSD dosage, which is no doubt its prime attraction amongst some sections of the 'New Age.' I foresee that it can only be a matter of time before the technique of holotropic breathwork will lead many of our young people on a path similar to that of drug addiction, especially in view of the hallucinogenic experiences prolonged

hyperventilation can cause.

"Why, therefore, is the Findhorn Foundation promoting a therapy which can, in the words of Dr. Grof, spontaneously cause reactions of 'violent shaking, grimacing, coughing, gagging, vomiting, a variety of movements, and a wide range of sounds that include screaming, baby talk, animal voices, talking in tongues or a language foreign to the client, shamanic chanting, and many others...'

"Is this compatible with an educational charity whose purpose is stated in their trust deed as 'the advancement of religion and religious studies and practices... by teaching, example and demonstration...?'

"Does Dr. Fellner support holotropic breathwork therapy? Perhaps she would give her professional opinion in view of her expressed concern on matters of health and complementary practices."¹⁴²

Dr. Cornelia Fellner never did make a public statement on the practice of Holotropic Breathwork therapy, and nor did she publicly clarify the type of "complementary" practices she intended to incorporate in her envisaged holistic health centre. It therefore did not come as a surprise to critics when the following month all ten General Practitioners from the Forres Health Centre, headed by Dr. R. J. Stewart, signed a letter to the press which stated, quite plainly:

"The General Practitioners of Forres have viewed the controversy over the proposed Holistic Health Centre with some concern and wish to make their views clear in order to correct a number of false rumours and misapprehensions which have been circulating.

"We are all in approval of authenticated methods of holistic medicine conducted by practitioners trained in recognised teaching establishments and fully registered with the appropriate professional body. We do not wish to endorse any unproved methods of alternative medicine by association.

"We do not plan to share any facilities with the Findhorn Holistic Health Centre, and, while we would like to emphasise that we are not against the concept of holistic medicine,

we would strongly recommend any patient to discuss the full range of potential treatments with their own doctor before embarking on other costly and possibly ineffective or even harmful regimes."¹⁴³

Two weeks later it was reported that "the controversial plan to build a Holistic Health Centre in the grounds of Minton House at Findhorn has been abandoned due to public pressure."¹⁴⁴

There was, however, still the unresolved issue of Holotropic Breathwork™. In a letter to the Findhorn Foundation Trustees, Findhorn village resident Sir Michael Joughin stated: "In the light of public criticism and distaste for the controversial semi-hallucinogenic routines involved in Holotropic Breathing Therapy—which even your Dr. Fellner described to me as being 'deeply intrusive'—I invite you to cancel your November course."¹⁴⁵ He suggested that such a therapy should not be included in any future 'spiritual' educational programmes.

Despite public concern and Sir Michael's appeal, the newly appointed Director of the Findhorn Foundation, Judy Buhler-McAllister, categorically refused to cancel the scheduled Holotropic Breathwork™ course for November 7–13, 1992. The *Forres Gazette* reported that Ms. Buhler-McAllister had "confirmed that the Foundation would welcome breathwork guru Dr. Stanislav Grof," who was described by the *Gazette* as "one of a group, including 1960's figurehead Timothy Leary, who 'pioneered' experimentation with psychedelic drugs, notably LSD." Readers were told that the "New Age community reaffirmed its role as a harbinger of change, which it points out is rarely comfortable for others."¹⁴⁶ It was an obdurate act of defiance against public opinion that the Findhorn Foundation would later regret.

Holotropic Breathwork™ is promoted by the Californian-based Grof Transpersonal Training, Inc. Its originator, Stanislav Grof, M.D., was born and educated in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and received an M.D. from Prague's Charles University School of Medicine, where he specialised in

psychiatry. He was the principal investigator for a programme at the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague that experimented with the potential psychiatric use of psychedelic therapy.

In 1967 he was invited to the U.S.A. by Johns Hopkins University as a clinical and research fellow and also to the research unit of Spring Grove State Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, where he continued his psychedelic research. In 1969 he was offered the position of chief of psychiatric research at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Centre.

Dr. Grof remained immersed in his LSD research work until 1973, then moved to California to become "scholar in residence" at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, a New Age therapy centre that has described itself as "a centre to encourage work in the humanities and sciences that promotes human values and potentials."¹⁴⁷

In 1975 Grof openly acknowledged that he was "deeply grateful to Esalen Institute at Big Sur... for offering me the opportunity to give lectures, seminars, and workshops in which I could test the early formulations of my ideas in contact with understanding and sympathetic audiences."¹⁴⁸ The doctor achieved celebrity status at Esalen due to his experiential interest in psychedelics, non-conventional psychotherapy, and altered states of consciousness.

The Esalen Institute was born in the early 1960's, and was associated in those early days with hallucinogenic drug advocates such as Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, Richard Alpert (later known as Ram Dass), and many others. Through its many "growth" programmes, which included therapies such as Wilhelm Reich's bioenergetics, the Gestalt Therapy of Fritz Perls, the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow, Will Schutz's Encounter groups, and various Eastern yogas and meditative disciplines, Esalen soon acquired "a reputation as an idyllic therapeutic hideaway: a place to enjoy weekend seminars and workshops, and discover your inner being."¹⁴⁹ It was emulated by the many "Growth Centres" which mushroomed in the 1970's in America and Britain, and which

included the Findhorn Foundation.

The social historian Theodore Roszak has referred to these "growth" therapies as being "therapies of gratification," because they "do not hesitate to promise their clientele joy and personal fulfilment" and are "shamelessly hedonistic."¹⁵⁰

It has been said that "the attitude to psychedelics at Esalen in the early years had always been comparatively relaxed."¹⁵¹ It was not surprising, therefore, that the first death which occurred at Esalen happened to be drug-related. Lois Delattre was on the staff of the first residential programme at Esalen, and according to Nevill Drury, "she had experimented with LSD, but she also wanted to explore the effects of the so-called 'love drug,' MDA, an amphetamine derivative of iso-saffrole which heightened sensory awareness and was said to produce states of emotional openness."¹⁵² The experimentation with MDA cost Lois Delattre her life.

This so-called "love drug" had achieved high acclaim amongst therapists, and according to Dr. Stanislav Grof, was "used by many professionals with great success in marital counselling and family therapy, as well as a means of restoring faith in human relations."¹⁵³ Dr. Grof, too, it seems, had experimented extensively with the drug, and wrote: "Therapeutic work with empathogens [such as MDA, MMDA, and MDMA] requires a different choice of music than psychotherapy with LSD or psilocybine. Sweet, gentle music, and flowing music seems to best correspond to the mode of action of these substances."¹⁵⁴ There is no hint of criticism from Dr. Grof regarding the use of empathogens.

A more responsible and critical attitude toward the use of empathogens was reported by *The Daily Mail* (30th November, 1994). Commenting upon the death of a young woman who had "suffered irreversible brain damage" after taking MDMA (Ecstasy), Dr. Richard Leach, of St. Thomas's Hospital, London, warned that MDMA "can kill you very quickly—after just one tablet. You may have taken it five times before and the next time it may still kill you." In the same report, at the coroner's court, Sir Montague, who

recorded a verdict of non-dependent abuse of Ecstasy, said that "youngsters had been fooled into thinking the drug was safe: [but] it's like playing Russian roulette because of its unpredictability."

It can therefore be argued that in some unfortunate cases, the most appropriate choice of music to "best correspond to the mode of action" of MDMA, would be a Requiem.

Partly in response to the controversy surrounding the use of psychedelics in psychotherapy, Dr. Stanislav Grof and his wife Christina were prompted to develop in 1976 a "nonpharmacological" technique that simulated the effects of LSD ingestion, then known as holonomic integration or holotropic therapy, and now better known commercially as Holotropic Breathwork™.

One of the theoretical assumptions of Holotropic Breathwork™ is that it can facilitate the emergence of unconscious memories and unresolved traumatic experiences. Dr. Grof has also claimed that by using holotropic therapy it is possible to induce phenomena that are often indistinguishable from the states produced by LSD and other psychedelic drugs.¹⁵⁵ The means to achieve this, however, is by artificially induced hypoxaemia (lack of oxygen to the brain) through increased rate of breathing (hyperventilation).

Psychiatrists and doctors have expressed grave concerns about Holotropic Breathwork™, from both a psychological and physiological point of view. It is well known among medical practitioners that even one deep breath can lower the carbon dioxide by 20%, and that the low level of carbon dioxide brought about by hyperventilation can trigger a wide range of physiological changes, and also altered mood states. In an informative article on the hazards of hyperventilation published in the *New Scientist*,¹⁵⁶ Judith Perera highlighted the "vicious cycle fuelled by carbon dioxide":

"The low level of carbon dioxide in hyperventilation triggers a wide range of physiological changes, many of which are not fully understood. It affects the activity of many cells within the body, especially those in the nervous system.

"Even a slight fall in the overall levels of carbon dioxide will stimulate nerve cells, which then prime the body for action. Muscle tension is increased, sensitivity and perception heightened, the pain threshold lowered and adrenaline released into the blood—the 'fight or flight' mechanism is in action.

"But as carbon dioxide levels fall even further, cells begin to produce lactic acid to reduce alkalinity, and metabolism begins to suffer. Fatigue, exhaustion and coma may result. The initial stimulation of nerve cells brought about by hyperventilation can cause tingling sensations, numbness, anaesthesia and, in some instances, convulsions.

"The cells making up smooth muscle are also kicked into action by low levels of carbon dioxide. The effect is to constrict blood vessels, including those serving the heart and brain. The heart may begin to pound, miss a few beats, produce palpitations or angina pains. The brain may receive up to 50 per cent less oxygen than normal, leading to dizziness, faintness, flashing lights or tunnel vision as well as a feeling of unreality.

"Low levels of carbon dioxide can also cause chemical changes in the membranes of mast cells, a type of white blood cell that plays a part in the immune system. This stimulates the cells to release histamine and other chemicals, which may reinforce changes already under way, such as the constriction of the blood vessels.

"Carbon dioxide also helps to maintain the correct pH —7.4—within the body. But if the level of carbon dioxide falls in the blood and other body fluids, molecules of carbon dioxide diffuse out of cells to replace it. The cells then become more alkaline than normal, and may be spurred into frantic activity."

It is evident that there are some very real physiological hazards associated with hyperventilation. It has been further stated elsewhere that, "As for the effect of hyperventilation on the brain, the physiology of even just carbon dioxide within the brain is extraordinarily complex. There

is vasoconstriction of both cerebral arteries and veins, leading to a reduced cerebral blood flow, which, combined with the greater avidity of oxygen to haemoglobin, still further reduces the available oxygen supply to the brain.”¹⁵⁷

Neurologists have in fact observed that reduced supply of oxygen to the brain can in turn trigger seizure activity in the brain’s limbic system, which includes the hippocampus, hypothalamus, amygdala, temporal lobe, and other structures associated with memory, mood and emotion. Several neurologists are of the opinion that limbic lobe agitation is a physiological basis for hallucinogenic experiences, and have recognised as indications of limbic lobe hyperactivity the following symptoms: depersonalisation, involuntary memory recall, intense emotions such as euphoria, and auditory, visual, or kinetic hallucinations—all of which are known to arise in the practice of Holotropic Breathwork™, and also through the ingestion of LSD and similar psychoactive substances.

In November 1992 *The Sunday Mail* reported under the heading “£415—To Learn Breathing” that “Britain’s law supremo has been asked to probe a Scottish ‘cult.’” The report continued: “The controversial New Age Findhorn Foundation are using a breathing therapy said to achieve the same effect as LSD . . . and costing up to £415.

“Worried locals [Sir Michael Joughin in particular] near the Moray centre have already asked the Charities Commission to probe the group’s charitable status.

“And now the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, has been urged [by Kate Thomas and others] to probe their use of Holotropic Breathing Therapy.”¹⁵⁸

The appeal to the Scottish Charities Office was due to Part 1 of the *Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions Scotland) Act 1990*, brought into force on 27th July 1992, and which made new provision for the supervision of charities in Scotland. It empowered the Lord Advocate “to investigate alleged misconduct and mismanagement in the affairs of charities,”¹⁵⁹ and also matters pertaining to the interests of the general

public.

The final results of the Scottish Charities Office investigation of Holotropic Breathwork™ were not publicised until October 1993, when it was announced that: "The controversial holotropic breathing workshops run by the Findhorn Foundation have been suspended."¹⁶⁰

A spokesperson for the Foundation confirmed that they had suspended the breathwork sessions "following a report produced in the last few months by an Edinburgh forensic doctor into the effects of hyperventilation."¹⁶¹ The report was in fact commissioned by the Scottish Charities Office (SCO).

However, it was further announced that one of the organisers of the breathwork workshops, Dr. David Mead, a Canadian, "said his work will go on, but not for the moment at the Foundation" and that "plans are in hand to hold workshops elsewhere in the UK."¹⁶²

Dr. Mead, along with three other Foundation members, were at the time training with Grof Transpersonal Training Inc. to become facilitators of Holotropic Breathwork™. Yet despite the fact that they had not completed their training, this did not prevent Dr. Mead or his colleagues from practising the controversial technique of holotropic breathing on a commercial basis.

In a promotional leaflet¹⁶³ for Holotropic Breathwork™ workshops, former Findhorn Foundation Director and Trustee, Craig Gibsone, described as "an artist, musician and potter" and another Foundation member, Marijke Wilhelmus, described as "a dancer and gardener," were (along with Dr. Mead and his wife) offering commercial workshops and "individual sessions" for the general public. Neither Gibsone or Wilhelmus had any professional qualifications in psychiatry, psychology or medicine.¹⁶⁴

Following the abovementioned report in the *Forres Gazette*, there appeared the next day an informative article in *The Scotsman*¹⁶⁵ in which Alan Forbes wrote:

"A New Age community in Moray has cancelled a meditation course after psychiatrists and local doctors expressed

alarm about potential dangers to participants . . .

"It is understood that the SCO commissioned a report into breathwork which has expressed strong criticism. Meanwhile a consultant psychiatrist, given breathwork literature by *The Scotsman*, has expressed alarm.

"Dr. Linda Watt, who practises at Leverndale psychiatric hospital in Glasgow, studied accounts of breathwork by Dr. David Mead, the Findhorn [Foundation] course organiser, and Prof. Stanislav Grof . . .

"Dr. Watt said hyperventilation could cause seizure or lead to potential psychosis in vulnerable people . . ." She added, "Physiologically, hyperventilation is quite a dramatic thing for your body. Instructions to have buckets, towels and sick bowls around you because you could lose control of all your body functions is alarming; it's really quite masochistic."

Dr. Grof had specified in one of his books that "pillows to buffer kicking or pounding," and "plastic bags or buckets in case of nausea and vomiting," were indispensable items in a room to be utilised for holotropic breathwork.¹⁶⁶

In a concerned letter to the editor of the *Forres Gazette*,¹⁶⁷ author Kate Thomas, who was now a resident of Forres and had recently become an Open Community member of the Findhorn Foundation, questioned Dr. Mead's defence of Holotropic Breathwork™. She wrote:

"I would like to strongly counter the statement made by Dr. Mead in last week's *Gazette* regarding holotropic breathwork therapy. He claimed that nobody who had questioned this technique had first-hand experience of its use.

"There may be very sound reasons for this. I was probably the first person to openly query this therapy when it was introduced into the Findhorn Foundation by a former Director, Craig Gibsone.

"Any therapy purporting to induce 'non-ordinary' states of consciousness of a 'spiritual' nature which requires such appurtenances as buckets, bowls and plastic bags—to accommodate the projectile sickness and loss of bladder and bowel control that are its frequent accompaniments—is surely

suspect.

"The above, plus the screaming, choking, emotional trauma, uninhibited behaviour, loss of muscular coordination, mental disorientation etc.—all graphically described by Dr. Grof in his books—has for many thinking people as much relationship to the states of consciousness indicative of spiritual growth as a butcher has to a brain surgeon.

"Having studied and taught in the field of metaphysics for over 30 years, I feel able to affirm categorically that genuine spiritual states arise from the genuine application of spiritual principles in everyday life over a lengthy period.

"There are no short cuts on the spiritual path—and any commercially oriented weekend course attempting to demonstrate otherwise is virtually a 'break-in' to the psyche which amounts to rape, with all that this implies.

"I would also question Dr. Mead's statement that workshop participants have all 'been delighted.' That is not what I have heard within the precincts of the Findhorn Foundation. Many members are deeply disturbed by what is done in their name, and certain unfortunates, to my knowledge, have come close to irreparable psychological damage through participation in this ill-advised commercial venture marketed as a method of attaining 'non-ordinary' states, meaning states assumed by Dr. Grof and his confederates to denote spiritual development.

"Furthermore, in view of the recent adverse, and warning, comments made by Dr. Linda Watt of Leverndale Psychiatric Hospital in Glasgow, and the report which I believe has been supplied to the Scottish Charities Office, at their request, by Dr. Anthony Busuttil, a forensic expert at Edinburgh University—which led to the suspension of the breathwork at Newbold House, Forres, and the Universal Hall, Findhorn Foundation—it would seem reasonable to anticipate that Dr. Mead and the Foundation breathwork team would now cease their promotion of this disputed California-based import into the UK.

"Dr. Mead, however, has publicly scorned the advice of our

medical authorities, and also the Scottish Charities Office. Instead, he and his team are preparing to disseminate this non-clinically researched experiment as widely as possible, commencing with New Age centres in the south of England.

"From such centres it is virtually certain that the hyperventilation technique will spread like wildfire amongst New Age groups in much the same way that the LSD sensation did in the Sixties, and with similar results.

"Having chosen to take this course of action, Dr. Mead and his team should in all decency cease to cause further embarrassment to the Foundation community by the relinquishment of their continued membership, staff positions, residential and entrepreneurial privileges, and effective determination of policy."

These suggestions were totally ignored. The Foundation policy was anything but thorough and conscientious. Although the Findhorn Foundation had, with reluctance, officially suspended their commercial practice and promotion of Holotropic Breathwork™, unofficially, private sessions were still being held within the precincts of the Foundation and it was also rumoured that group sessions likewise were still in operation. This was with the full knowledge and consent of the Foundation's Director, Judy Buhler-McAllister, and also seemingly the Trustees.

In July 1994 this glaring incongruity was reported in the local press as follows: "Chairman of Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council, Sir Michael Joughin, said that he understood tuition in the hyperventilation technique, said to induce a 'high' equivalent to that of an LSD trip, was being run on a one-to-one basis" within the Foundation. According to the *Forres Gazette*,¹⁶⁸ "he [Sir Michael] was told the Foundation had no jurisdiction over the activities of individuals," despite the fact that Foundation staff members were involved. The *Gazette* went on to inform readers: "Holotropic breathwork courses run by Foundation supporters David and Lizzie Mead have been advertised to take place in Dorset and Cumbria, on a leaflet saying further information is

available from the Findhorn Foundation. Four practitioners are listed—David and Lizzie Mead, former Foundation Director Craig Gibsone, and Marijke Wilhelmus.”

Despite the recommendations to the Foundation by the Scottish Charities Office to cease the practice of the hyperventilation technique, Dr. David Mead and his wife defiantly continued to commercially promote workshops for Holotropic Breathwork in the south of England, their prime venue being Monkton Wyld Court, Dorset, a so-called “Centre for Holistic Education” owned by a residential New Age community offering “inspirational courses” for the general public. (See the advertisement in *Kindred Spirit*, Winter 1993 – Feb 1994, p. 49).

As for Dr. Stanislav Grof, his entrepreneurial activities were also advertised in the abovementioned New Age magazine—sandwiched between the “Academy of Crystal” offering courses in “Crystal Therapy” and “The Sacred Art of Clowning”—and in company with: “ELEGANT OCCULT Female seeks soulmate/bubblebath companion.”¹⁶⁹

Dr. Grof’s advertisement was for a “retreat” in Switzerland entitled *Insight and Opening: The Power of the Breath and Meditation*. Grof had teamed up with a former Buddhist monk, Jack Kornfield, and Holotropic Breathwork™ combined with Buddhist Insight Meditation (*Vipassana*) was now on offer to the general public along with four-star hotel accommodation. For the sum of 1280 Swiss francs, that is. It seemed somewhat ironic that Kornfield had written a book with the subtitle: “A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life.”

Further disturbing evidence of the Findhorn Foundation’s on-going connection with Holotropic Breathwork™ came to light in March 1995, and from an unexpected quarter: the Church of England.

The *Forres Gazette* was obliged to report¹⁷⁰ that “intensive breathing exercises banned at Findhorn Foundation workshops are set to go ahead in London—with the blessing of the Church of England.” It was stated:

"The controversial holotropic breathwork technique will be featured at the Alternative Workshops Centre at St. James, Piccadilly, London, in the diocese of the Bishop of London, Dr. David Hope. . . .

"The classes, due to take place in two weekends in April and October, will be run by New Age guru William Bloom, a long-time supporter of the Findhorn Foundation. His wife, Sabrina Dearborn, is a Trustee of Alternative Workshops and a former member of the Findhorn Foundation.

"Helping out on the courses are Foundation staff members Gill Emslie and Marijke Wilhelmus."

William Bloom has strong links with the Findhorn Foundation; he and his wife Sabrina Dearborn (now a Foundation Trustee) have jointly run many commercial Foundation courses based on what is termed the "Western Mystery Tradition," a rather questionable amalgam of occult, magical, and pagan beliefs, practices, and fantasies. William Bloom has described his dabbling with ceremonial magic and the resulting occult experiences in his book *The Sacred Magician: a ceremonial diary*.¹⁷¹ This book is described by Bloom as being "the diary that I kept during a six month magical ritual known as *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*."¹⁷²

The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage achieved publication in 1898 in the version of the occultist S. L. MacGregor Mathers. The book describes a six month ritual of ceremonial magic, at the climax of which, it is alleged, "full communication" with one's "Holy Guardian Angel" is attained, plus the summoning and controlling of demonic entities! This book has achieved acclaim among undiscerning and semi-literate Western occultists as an authentic text of medieval Jewish Kabbalah. Yet, according to the renowned Kabbalistic scholar Gershom Scholem, "*The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin* . . . was not in fact written by a Jew . . . It shows the partial influence of Jewish ideas but does not have any strict parallel in Kabbalistic literature."¹⁷³ After William Bloom had completed the six-month pseudo-Kabbalistic ritual, the resulting "illness and

convalescence lasted almost two years."¹⁷⁴

Donald Reeves, the Rector of St. James's Church, Piccadilly, "known internationally for its radical ministry,"¹⁷⁵ has been described in terms of "one of the most radical priests of our time."¹⁷⁶ St. James's, Piccadilly, has been designated a "New Age church" by some Christian analysts,¹⁷⁷ who have expressed concern that "St. James's is heavily into a New Age programme which has links with the occult."¹⁷⁸

Donald Reeves has sought to defend his radical ministry against critics, and has stated: "I know of many who have found Christ through the hospitality we have offered. It is a difficult ministry, easily misunderstood and sometimes, as I have often said and freely admit, we have made mistakes. We are the only church in the United Kingdom which provides this sort of hospitality for the New Age—now worldwide, some ninety million strong."¹⁷⁹

The radical Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, had evidently made yet another mistake—the *Forres Gazette* further reported the following week that "Church of England officials are distancing themselves from intensive breathing workshops with a Findhorn [Foundation] connection being held in association with a programme of events run by a London church."¹⁸⁰

The *Gazette* informed readers that "Secretary to the Church's Board of Social Responsibility, Mr. David Skidmore, has stressed that the Church of England has *not* given its blessing to intensive breathing exercises . . . 'Neither the House of Bishops nor the General Synod has expressed an official view on this subject,' he said. 'The only comments I am aware of from Church of England sources have expressed negative views of the breathwork technique.'"

The article continued: "Mr. Skidmore said he had received an assurance from the Rector of St. James's that he would not allow such sessions to take place in the church building. They will now be held at a North Hackney leisure centre in April."

Alternatives Director William Bloom—whose wife Sabrina

Dearborn was reported to be a Foundation Trustee, one of nine who withdrew the breathwork sessions when faced with the SCO report—admitted to the *Gazette* that “those unfamiliar with the technique could be alarmed by sounds of screaming from participants.” Yet he concluded by saying that he did not think that the hyperventilation technique which can lead to vomiting, shaking and screaming was much more intense than a “good rave or disco.” The technique was advertised by William Bloom and his Foundation colleagues as ideally suited for those seeking “an expanded mystical and spiritual dimension in their lives.”

In a recent (1994) publication from the Findhorn Press entitled *The Kingdom Within: A Guide to the Spiritual Work of the Findhorn Community*, former Foundation Trustee, Alex Walker, made this passing and diminutive reference to Holotropic Breathwork™: “Stanislav Grof, the originator of this form of therapy, is adamant that it is a spiritual technique with an ancient shamanistic lineage. To its detractors it is a practice which induces potentially dangerous psychological states. Legal problems make the future of breathwork in the community difficult to assess, but its positive impact on the lives of many individuals here has already been considerable.”¹⁸¹ I have commented elsewhere: “Walker’s understatement totally ignores the sociological background from which arose the legalities concerning the commercial practice and promotion of Holotropic Breathwork™ by a charitable educational trust. There was also no reference to the SCO’s commissioned report on hyperventilation, which proves that the Foundation has no real concept of education, charitable or otherwise.”¹⁸² As to Walker’s reference to Holotropic Breathwork™ being a technique with an alleged “shamanistic lineage,” according to Professor R. Metzner, “Breathing techniques have not, to my knowledge, been documented in shamanic traditions...” See S. Nicholson, comp., *Shamanism* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books, 1987), p. 239.

In the report commissioned by the Scottish Charities Office, Professor Anthony Busuttil, Head of the Department of

Pathology at Edinburgh University, passed a negative verdict on the possible consequences of Holotropic Breathwork™ from a medical point of view that is surely relevant to the public interests. Thus, when the Findhorn Foundation made an appeal to the SCO in 1995 to resume the controversial hyperventilation practice—it was rejected.

In view of Dr. David Mead's continued association with the commercial practice of Holotropic Breathwork™, it did not come as a surprise to critics to find his photograph on the front page of *The Sunday Mail* under the caption "CULT GURU GETS TOP NHS JOB." Readers were informed that "A wacky doctor who claimed he turned into a 'howling wolf' has landed a key job with a Scottish hospital trust."

The article continued: "David Mead specialises in bizarre breathing classes and runs pizza takeaway shops with his wife . . . Now he has been appointed to a senior post in a psychiatric unit. . . . The Canadian-born doctor has been appointed senior house officer at the unit in Dr. Gray's Hospital in Elgin, Moray.

"The doctor openly promotes his classes in breathing methods, which send patients into a deep trance.

"But the technique known as holotropic breathing, can have dramatic side effects and has been condemned by experts.

"They say it can give an LSD-type 'trip' and can result in seizures. During one session, Dr. Mead said he turned into a 'snarling, fighting wolf.'"

When Dr. Mead was asked for a professional comment regarding concern over his appointment, he was reported to have said: "Tough! You're trying to make something out of nothing."¹⁸³

Note.

The present writer was amazed to learn during September 1995 that another Holotropic Breathwork™ workshop was being advertised by Alternatives, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, and scheduled to take place at an undisclosed venue over a period of three days during the following month of

October. I therefore decided to contact David Skidmore, the Secretary for the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility. I had been in contact with Skidmore earlier in the year, and had been informed at the time that the Board had contacted "four medical experts" for their professional views on the controversial hyperventilation technique. Two of the medical experts contacted were Professor Anthony Busuttill and Dr. Linda Watt, both of whom had previously expressed grave concerns on the subject of Holotropic Breathwork™, the former having written the report commissioned by the Scottish Charities Office that halted the commercial promotion of Holotropic Breathwork™ at the Findhorn Foundation.

In my letter to David Skidmore, I enquired:

"I was informed in April of this year that the Board for Social Responsibility had consulted four medical experts on the matter of Holotropic Breathwork™. (a) Was the Board satisfied with those reports? (b) Did any of the reports stress the potential physiological or psychological hazards related to the effects of hyperventilation? (c) Does the Board still feel that there are "grounds for grave concern" regarding the hyperventilation technique, or does it now consider Holotropic Breathwork™ to be a perfectly safe practice?"¹⁸⁴

I also asked Skidmore the following questions:

Was Donald Reeves, the Rector of St. James's Church, informed of the content of the above reports? Will the advertised workshop be held on church premises? Why is Holotropic Breathwork™ still being advertised in association with St. James's Church?

In his reply, David Skidmore stated:

"The reports I received are confidential. They have not and will not, therefore, be made available to third parties. At its meeting on 28 June the Board's Executive Committee decided that it would not be appropriate for it to make a judgement either about Holotropic Breathwork specifically or different types of 'therapy' in general.

"So far as your questions are concerned you will under-

stand from what I have said that I am not in a position to provide the answers you seek. . . ."185

Critics are surely justified in thinking that the Board for Social Responsibility had acted irresponsibly in this particular instance. The Board's aloof retreat from due ethical criteria awards no serious consideration to the actual social ramifications of its decision. The Board's Executive Committee has in effect sanctioned not only Holotropic Breathwork™, but also all other questionable New Age therapies and practitioners.

One has only to look at the programme of events for Alternatives, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, to assess the true nature of the purported "spiritual" activities commercially promoted by William Bloom. "Workshops" are being sold to the general public with titles such as "The Money Game," "Spiritual Assertiveness, Personal Power," and "Prosperity Consciousness."¹⁸⁶ Bloom surely reveals himself as a New Age entrepreneur. He has even written a handbook entitled *Pump up the Volume: A manual for putting on new age lectures and workshops* (1990), which seeks to justify the making of money out of so-called spiritual activities. Recently, William Bloom has contributed to the New Age vogue for psychic "channelling." In a book entitled *The Christ Sparks* (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1995), Bloom records how he became the psychic channel for a "group consciousness" from "another energy-field" in a different dimension to that of our planet, a consciousness that described itself as being "like a swarm of bees, a beneficent virus" and which is currently "incarnating through places like the Findhorn Foundation. . . ." Bloom informs us that the "Christ Sparks" have "dramatically changed healing and therapy techniques." Are we then to believe that the "Christ Sparks" are responsible for the commercial virus known as Holotropic Breathwork™?

In a conversation I had with Kate Thomas, she said that to her knowledge a substantial number of the Findhorn Foundation membership left the community because of their concern about Holotropic Breathwork™. Thomas was told of

a member who was so disoriented following a Breathwork session that she sat in her caravan for several weeks unable to overcome her symptoms or take up her daily work, and of a second woman who was "virtually insane" for a fortnight and could not wash or feed herself; and thirdly, of a male Breathwork trainee who experienced a nervous breakdown lasting nearly two years—his "spiritual crisis" helpers (Foundation members designated to assist those left with such problems) convinced him that his breakdown was a consequence of his own inadequacy and inability to integrate the material thrown up by his subconscious. This latter casualty, when sufficiently recovered, feared to take the matter further as his wife was their breadwinner and held a senior, salaried position within the community.

The above cases were reported to Thomas by:

(1) A personal friend of the disoriented female victim, who protested strongly to the organisers of the Breathwork sessions to no avail.

(2) The female member of the Foundation who looked after the person that temporarily lost her sanity and who afterwards greatly regretted not calling an ambulance and getting the patient hospitalised. Her reasons for restraint were personal—she had lived with a senior male staff member who had recently replaced her with someone else and, having a child, she feared removal from the community if she made a fuss. This woman was, in fact, very callously ejected from the Foundation shortly afterwards, as her rented caravan stood on a site required for an "eco-house." She later reported the entire matter to a solicitor and to the Scottish Charities Office.

(3) The male counsellor (not a "spiritual crisis" helper) to whom the sick person turned for assistance at a crisis point in his breakdown, and who allegedly stayed up all night with him. This counsellor was also removed from the community by Management for reputed "trouble making"—meaning reporting certain issues to the Scottish Charities Office. These issues, as far as is known, were never looked into by that

body, regrettably being deemed "personal" matters between members. The above-mentioned counsellor asserted, among other things, that "drug-parties" took place within the Foundation and were attended by senior staff, whom he named. He also said that some of the staff were covertly bi-sexual and homosexual and engaged in various highly promiscuous activities. (There is a large gay and lesbian group within the community). These statements made by the counsellor, complete with the same names, were reiterated quite independently and almost word for word to former Foundation Associate member Jill Rathbone one year later, by a disaffected member (not the counsellor).

7. "Foundation 'ban' shocks author"

In March 1992, three months before the publication of *The Destiny Challenge*, Kate Thomas and Eileen Caddy met by chance in a Forres supermarket. Thomas took the opportunity presented by the encounter to ask Eileen Caddy the reason why she had been denied Associate membership the previous year, a pertinent question to which Caddy could only reply that she "did not know," although she admitted to having sanctioned the staff decision. Dismayed by the evasive attitude, Thomas sent Caddy a letter:

"To say that I was shocked by your attitude is an understatement. That you can go along with the ostracism of myself by the staff of your community and *not know* the reason for their extreme and totalitarian behaviour is almost beyond belief. As I said to you, I must be the only person in the U.K., if not the world, to be banned in this manner by the Findhorn Foundation, a supposedly 'spiritual' community practising, according to its publicity, co-operative living, tolerance, and 'unconditional love.' This 'love' manifests all too frequently in members of your community cutting me dead in the street, persons with whom I have formerly worked amicably and with whom I have never quarrelled. What they have been told, *and by whom*, I do not know, but they treat me like some kind of criminal. To learn that *you also* do not know of what I am accused, and yet are prepared to support this preposterous and heartless behaviour, is quite incredible. . . ." ¹⁸⁷ Eileen Caddy declined to answer the letter.

Also before the publication of her book, in May 1992 Kate

Thomas approached the new Director of the Foundation, Judy Buhler-McAllister, requesting a meeting to discuss these unsatisfactory evasions. The Director was also extremely evasive, and professed total ignorance of the situation. To remedy this, a 40 page excerpt taken from the proofs of *The Destiny Challenge* was therefore sent to her on behalf of Thomas, the enclosed material being relevant to the events that led to the rejection of Kate Thomas from Associate membership the previous year and also to the related matter of Gemma Whibley. The covering letter read:

"Please find enclosed the documentation Kate Thomas requested I send you. The file contains all the material relating to the events in question up to October 1991. . . . It should provide a continuity and comprehensiveness of factual data that may well be difficult to collate from amongst those of the Findhorn Foundation membership involved. It is sincerely hoped that the enclosed documentation will contribute to 'the groundwork for a deeper level of truth telling' (to quote from your article in the current issue of *One Earth*)."¹⁸⁸

The Foundation's Director reluctantly agreed to a meeting, but also delayed that matter until late July. The aim was to discuss the vetoed Associate membership, but the very suspicious condition was imposed that Gemma Whibley could not attend the meeting, despite the specific request of Thomas that Whibley should be invited. In view of Whibley's non-inclusion, Kate Thomas wrote to Buhler-McAllister following an unsatisfactory telephone call to the latter's office, and declined to attend the meeting:

"In view of the content of our conversation of this morning, I do not think there is any point in proceeding with the proposed arrangement for a meeting in late July. I had assumed you would be quite shocked by the behaviour (and attitudes) of your fellow staff and take a firm line accordingly. Instead, you seem more inclined to the view (asserted by those concerned) that I have distorted the material presented. Likewise offputting is your adamantness that Gemma

Whibley should not be present at the proposed meeting as I requested, as in your view the matter of her problems with the same staff members is a different issue entirely. This is most definitely not the case, as I pointed out. Gemma is a key witness to all that occurred, and her distress and near-collapse (observed and monitored by a medical doctor) was a direct outcome of the attitudes towards myself which she could not confront, as those responsible gave her no opportunity to do so.

"You do not appear to grasp the seriousness of what occurred, nor to have any intention of dealing effectively with those holding senior positions in a registered charity, which they have abused. To talk with people who are not prepared to acknowledge the truth of their behaviour can yield nothing useful. I am not looking for compromises, but for reasons and admissions, and I am obliged to accept that I will not be given either while you hold your present stance. You have consistently relegated this matter to the end-of-the-line in your list of priorities. It should have been raised and dealt with when I first approached you. Reports on lack of staff integrity should claim your first consideration in your current position. To shelve this onus leaves your own integrity open to question, and renders null and void your statement on 'a deeper level of truth telling' recorded in *One Earth* magazine."¹⁸⁹

During the spring/summer of the following year, 1993, Kate Thomas again sought to become an Associate member of the Foundation, a category of membership now redefined as: "A two year programme for people who want to make a deeper connection and support the work of the Foundation on a part-time voluntary basis."¹⁹⁰ She also sought to make peace with those who had opposed her previous application—Foundation staff members who were still quite definitely unwilling to articulate the reasons for their objections towards her. Observers of the situation felt that Thomas was giving the Foundation staff a very fair opportunity to rectify their former slanders and misbehaviour.

Her book had evidently caused a major stir within the Foundation, and according to one Foundation spokesperson, the "staff named in the book were concerned at what had been written."¹⁹¹ Perhaps as part of a strategy to avoid any further adverse publicity, the Foundation reluctantly entered into dialogue with her. Unfortunately, the hostile undercurrents from those who were mentioned in *The Destiny Challenge* could not be restrained, and almost immediately a major stumbling-block arose.

As a sincere gesture towards reconciliation, at the end of May 1993, Thomas attended an introductory weekend workshop sponsored by the Foundation and entitled *The Art of Living in Peace*. It was described as "a programme recommended by the 26th General Assembly of UNESCO."¹⁹² The workshop was facilitated by Pierre Weil, "UNESCO's Advisor on Education for Peace."

The *Living in Peace* workshop was held in a building in the grounds of Cluny Hill College, and as the participants broke up for lunch on the first day and all made their way to the College dining room, Kate Thomas was deliberately singled out and prevented from entering and joining her fellow "peacemakers." The person responsible for the discriminative act was Stan Stanfield, the Foundation staff member who was focalising the event. Describing her feelings some time after, Thomas wrote:

"I was treated like some kind of leper, to my acute embarrassment and distress, despite the fact that at the time I was a fee-paying member of the public, and the event was UNESCO recommended—a body preoccupied, I believe, with human rights."¹⁹³

(In January 1991, Stan Stanfield, an American, along with about fourteen persons from the U.K., had flown to Iraq during the Gulf War to join an international Peace Camp sited within an Iraqi military zone a few miles from Baghdad. His reasons for going were stated in a diary record of the trip printed in *One Earth* magazine:

"I'm going to the camp to be a witness for peace and for

a better way of being and living on this planet. I go not submissively but warlike and not as a martyr but as a lightbearer."¹⁹⁴

Yet within days of arriving in Iraq and joining the Peace Camp, the "lightbearer" became involved in a number of petty, internal issues of disagreement and argumentation within the camp that caused him to reflect: "Are we here for Peace? Or just our own personal agendas? . . ." ¹⁹⁵ The discord pervading the "peace camp" finally became so acute that even Stanfield had to concede: ". . . the camp is in no way united, so some are becoming a bit disillusioned with the fact of the camp, as opposed to the theory."¹⁹⁶

In a critical letter that later appeared in *One Earth* magazine, Alan Rees drew attention to some of the actual realities of the Gulf War overlooked by Stan Stanfield and his fellow "lightbearers" as they became "bogged down on the issue of cats and dogs," and their "personal agendas." Rees wrote:

"A lot of this 'New Age' stuff seems to be ill thought out, self-indulgent and downright dangerous. A case in point is Stan Stanfield's meandering report from his 'peace camp' in the Gulf. Has a copy been sent to Kuwait? It would be interesting to hear what the Kuwaitis think about it. It will doubtless be of great comfort to them to know that while they were being robbed, tortured, raped, murdered and treated with a savagery reminiscent of the worse excesses of the SS, Mr. Stanfield was doing his best to ensure that no one would come to their rescue, while agonising about whether to let cats into his tent . . . In an earlier age, one could imagine Stan and his friends lying on a Normandy beach to prevent the D-Day landings, or perhaps sitting outside Auschwitz to prevent the allies putting a stop to what was going on. . . . Stan's trip was a waste of time and money").¹⁹⁷

Stan Stanfield had already voiced, in a published letter to the editor of *The Northern Scot* (21st August, 1992), the fact that he was among those Foundation staff members who

had sent *The Destiny Challenge* "to our solicitor to determine the legal rights, if any, we had in relation to what had been written about us and about individuals here referred to by name . . ."

In a reply to Stanfield, also published by *The Northern Scot*, he was reminded by Dr. S. J. Darke that "his name was mentioned only in the context of Gemma Whibley's personal plea to himself for assistance, which he was unwilling to give as he was 'too busy' and did not wish to become involved."¹⁹⁸

It was quite evident that a number of senior Foundation staff members at Cluny Hill College did not wish to risk the incongruities of their behaviour to be further observed and commented upon by Kate Thomas, who was therefore debarred entry. One can deduce that this was the real reason why her re-application for Associate membership was blocked—because, if granted, it would have allowed her to have undisputed access to Cluny Hill College and all that went on there. No other rationale fits the situation.

Undeterred by the hypocrisy evidenced at *The Art of Living in Peace* workshop, a further effort was made towards reconciliation. Kate Thomas contacted various staff members who were not resident at Cluny Hill College but who lived at the Park and elsewhere. These were persons who had previously been unfriendly towards her and who, in some cases, had been instrumental in blocking her more recent application for Associate membership. She wrote letters to each of them and stated that she was prepared to overlook the past and start again.

Her efforts finally found a small degree of response, and a meeting to discuss the issue surrounding her possible Associate membership was eventually held in the sittingroom of Eileen Caddy's home in mid-August. Also in attendance were Jill Brierley (Human Relations Dept.), Katarina Brocke (overall Park focaliser), and Sue Miles (overall Cluny Hill College focaliser). The result was summed up by Kate Thomas in a letter to Sue Miles after the meeting:

"The subject matter supposedly under discussion was the content of my letter to Jill Brierley of July 31st, not one single line of which was actually touched upon [see Appendix, pp. 220ff.]. What *was* made plain was that those present were unwilling to admit me to Associate membership *even with an appropriate sponsor*, the reason being that this, in my case, would require a consensus opinion from the entire Community, and you were all quite certain that this was likely to go against me. The only logic I could obtain for this conviction was that, in the wake of last year's adverse publicity re the Foundation, considerable confusion existed concerning myself.

"My request that this confusion should be looked into and rectified was rejected, as has been any previous request of mine for open discussion and resolution of this ongoing, long-term, and to me, extremely distressing situation. I am required to wait around for an unspecified period until members are sufficiently reassured that I am relatively harmless, whereupon something will 'click' (the term used by Jill Brierley) and a miraculous change occur. I am expected to accept this 'decision' without query, and without reaction, as an act of 'surrender' to the inner beliefs of those presiding. These presumed 'intuitions,' which were refused subjection to rational scrutiny, are deemed sacrosanct. My views are not, which therefore left me with no rights at all in the matter."¹⁹⁹

In July 1993, Thomas had decided to take the only option extended to her, which was to become an Open Community member of the Foundation. She still hoped that Foundation policies would change in the light of local criticism. Open Community membership was then described by the Foundation as "designed primarily for people who have their own work projects but who are aligned to the spiritual impulse of this Centre and wish to establish an informal link."²⁰⁰

Sadly, the feelings of hostility towards Kate Thomas were just beneath the surface. Very few Foundation staff members showed any sign of friendship and reconciliation, and

only a handful would even acknowledge her presence within the community. She was approached now and then by various staff members, but it was transparent that they merely sought to probe her motives for being in the community. All the while, the typical slogans of compassion and love were being commercially aired in Foundation precincts. These slogans and statements do not apply in real life.

Also in July 1993, the present writer applied for Open Community membership. I had formerly been an Associate member during the period 1989–1990 whilst residing in Findhorn village, and had also prior to this attended a number of Foundation courses in 1988. During my time as an Associate member I conceived, produced, and co-edited the only scientifically-oriented journal ever to appear within the Findhorn Community, namely, *Confluence*. Yet despite fine-sounding Foundation rhetoric such as, “We need to encourage differences, not suppress them,” which appeared in an article entitled “Science and Mystery: The Beauty of Surprise,” printed in the Foundation’s magazine *One Earth* (Volume 9, Issue 2, Summer 1989, p. 39), the Foundation Management reacted strongly against a serious attempt to introduce a scientific element into their supposedly “holistic” New Age community. As a direct consequence, *Confluence* terminated after only one issue (November 1989).²⁰¹

Hoping that the Findhorn Foundation (an educational charity) had become more open to the acceptance of a much wider range of educational viewpoints than those officially subscribed to, I decided to renew my association. It was to be some seven months before the necessary interview could be arranged, during which time I entered into a quite lengthy correspondence with Gordon Cutler of the Findhorn Foundation’s Human Relations Department. Cutler, an American, and a Holotropic Breathwork™ trainee practitioner at that time, was one of the few staff members of the Foundation who had an academic background. Despite our different viewpoints on the matter of the Breathwork, I took a liking to him, and our correspondence involved an exchange of ideas

and opinions that was uncommon in Foundation circles. I hoped that he would attempt to change staff policies.

In a letter written to Cutler a month before the actual interview for Open Community membership was arranged, I had joked:

"You mention that you are being allowed by the Foundation to 'play the iconoclast.' I wish you luck! Socrates is reported to have said that 'the unexamined life is not worth living.' However, as an applied dialectic process the experiential extensions of this maxim were to prove too much for some of his interlocutors, and thus cost poor Socrates his life. May you have a much happier fate, Gordon! In fact, may we both!!!"²⁰² A statement that sadly proved to be optimistic in view of the subsequent "hemlock" administered to both myself and Kate Thomas.

On the 12th January, 1994, a two hour interview ensued between Gordon Cutler and myself. It was an informative and amicable meeting, after which I went out and purchased three books describing the process-oriented psychology of Arnold Mindell. This was because Gordon Cutler had mentioned during our conversation that the theories of Mindell, and the terminology employed in process-oriented psychology, were currently part of the "culture" of the Findhorn Foundation Community.²⁰³ Shortly following the meeting, Cutler warmly expressed in a letter to me: "I want to take this opportunity to say how much I enjoyed meeting you last week and look forward to further get-togethers."²⁰⁴

During the course of our interview the issue of Kate Thomas arose, and Gordon Cutler evinced that he was sufficiently interested in the situation to enquire into the earlier events surrounding the banning of Thomas from Associate membership and also the circumstances which led to Gemma Whibley's relinquishment of student status. (He had been on prolonged leave in the U.S.A. at the time of those events). Cutler had even agreed to read the relevant chapter in *The Destiny Challenge*, apparently an impossible feat for the other Foundation staff members, who were

content to rely upon hearsay and defamation, and who treated the matter of Gemma Whibley with the most extreme evasion.

On the basis of what was conveyed to her, Kate Thomas sent a note of gratitude to Cutler, in which she wrote:

"I have been informed that as a result of your conversation this morning, you are willing to read through Chapter 14 of my book, and to enquire into the facts surrounding the ban upon myself and the distressed relinquishment of student membership of the Findhorn Foundation by Gemma Whibley. I am very grateful to you for this, as I have found it impossible, despite several discussions with senior staff, to broach the actual crux of the matter. Strangely enough, I received a letter from Gemma yesterday following a period of several months without contact, and I will let her know what is happening. I am sure she will be very willing to come here from Cambridge in order to meet those concerned and hopefully heal the wound in herself that is still apparent.

"Patrick Nash [the Foundation's Head of Administration] told me only last week that an internal enquiry had been held concerning Gemma and the matter was now concluded, but in my view, no enquiry can be conclusive without the knowledge, let alone the participation, of the person around whom it revolves. [See Appendix, p. 228].

"I would like to emphasise that I did, in fact, 'release' [New Age jargon which translates in this instance as: forgive and forget] what occurred before reapproaching the Foundation for Open Community membership. Unhappily, because the situation was never properly, that is, openly, dealt with, others have *not* 'released' their unfounded attitudes with regard to myself."²⁰⁵

Two days later a much shorter, though similar letter, was sent by Thomas to Judy Buhler-McAllister, expressing her gratitude (and her genuine surprise) that Gordon Cutler was willing to personally look into the matter of her past relationship with the Foundation, and also the unresolved issue of Gemma Whibley.

This evoked a letter to the present writer, in which Gordon Cutler stated: "I was very surprised to receive a letter from Kate last Friday . . . She says she understands from you that I am specifically inquiring into Gemma's relinquishment of membership and her banishment . . . Have you misunderstood what I meant by offering to read through and comment on Chapter 14?

" . . . The only thing I could think is that Chapter 14 might deal only with Gemma and Kate's banishment ('ban') and therefore to you my 'reading and commenting' might equate with an enquiry into that specific train of events. . . . Judy [Buhler-McAllister] tells me the chapter does not just focus on those events, but contains much general comment on the Foundation,"²⁰⁶ he added. His tone was now different, and he had clearly been influenced by another party; evasion was again triumphant.

Gordon Cutler's letter had been delivered by a Foundation courier, at the same time as a letter of the same date was also delivered in that manner to Kate Thomas from Judy Buhler-McAllister, who officially informed Thomas: "I wish to state categorically that I no longer support the Foundation, as an organisation, having a formal relationship with you. I therefore enclose with this letter a refund of your subscription fee to the Open Community Programme."²⁰⁷ The letter also stated that Patrick Nash had denied to Buhler-McAllister that he had divulged to Thomas the fact of an internal enquiry concerning Gemma Whibley. This act of expulsion took place five days before the date arranged by Loren Stewart and Jill Brierley with Kate Thomas for the latter's long awaited and petitioned interview for Associate membership.

The contrived and underhand nature of these events was all too obvious. The following reply by the present writer was sent to Gordon Cutler:

"Thank you for your letter and enclosure of 21st Jan. Your letter in fact arrived alongside Ms. Buhler-McAllister's somewhat megalomaniac 'bell, book and candle' pronouncement

upon Kate Thomas, informing her that she is now officially excommunicated, and therefore an outcast (of 'untouchable' status, no doubt) from the religious and charitable precincts of the Findhorn Foundation. I trust that when Buhler-McAllister is next invited to speak before UNESCO, she will acquaint them of her despotic act—I believe that UNESCO still has a concern for human rights, unlike the Foundation's Director, or should that read, Dictator.

"You should surely not be so 'surprised,' Gordon, to receive a letter from a woman expressing her heartfelt thanks towards yourself because you had expressed a sincere (?) concern for her case, particularly after I had conveyed to her the extent of your interest (whether feigned by you, or otherwise). If you were not really interested, why was the subject entered into, and so extensively between ourselves? It takes two to make a conversation. If you had no real intention of *seriously* investigating the documentation relating to the circumstances which were the causative factors behind both Kate Thomas's and Gemma Whibley's issue with *specific* members of the Foundation, then why did you ask me in the course of our two-hour conversation if I would be willing to 'step back,' should such a process of conflict-resolution be initiated? If you care to remember, I replied that I would be quite happy not to become personally involved, should such a process occur, and that it was essentially a matter between Kate, Gemma, and the individuals implicated. The important factor for myself, as an observer, was that something pragmatic should actually be implemented, i.e., face to face dialogue, which was surely the logical action required, and which has all along been requested by Kate.

"In fact, almost an hour of our meeting was primarily concerned with the above important, unresolved issue of Kate, Gemma, and the *handful* of Foundation membership who continue to evade a direct confrontation with the disparities between their behaviour and what they profess to exemplify by their membership of the Foundation. I had, as is now quite evident, naively thought that during our meeting we

were both attempting a totally honest and groundbreaking endeavour to *stay with the edge*, so to speak, to use the terminology of the psychologist Arnold Mindell you recommended to me. This term being descriptive of the process-oriented psychology approach of focusing *directly* upon the resistance (*edge*) of certain groups and individuals to becoming aware of their psychological incongruities and disavowed behaviour—rather than distracting attention from the essential issues which require confrontation.

“What really is the use of the Foundation sponsoring educational courses on Peace, on Relationships, and on techniques and strategies for Conflict Resolution, when it totally refuses to apply such methods to resolve its own internal relational conflicts? The Foundation’s Director has acted like some paranoid cult-leader. Is it any cause for wonder that academics do not take the Foundation seriously?

“... You asked me during our interview of 12th Jan. how I would feel if Kate’s application for Associate membership were refused. I felt at the time that this was rather a strange question, due to the fact that the actual interview had not even taken place. However, I replied that the individuals who made such a decision would have to substantiate their reasons for the exclusion. In the light of these recent events, one must now logically ask why Kate Thomas was excommunicated from the Findhorn Foundation due to a now evident misunderstanding between ourselves? Kate acted on information that I had enthusiastically conveyed to her after our meeting, so it was I, and not her, who was the cause of Buhler-McAllister’s paranoia and subsequent irrational action. I suggest, Gordon, that you convey the above rational argument to your cult-leader...”

“Finally, re Patrick Nash and his denial that there ever was an enquiry into the Gemma Whibley episode: I am in possession of a signed and witnessed document which states that such an enquiry was agreed upon and held in the Foundation. The minutes from that meeting should therefore be available to you, the content of which Gemma would

have the right to contest if she felt it was not factually representative of what had actually occurred between her and the Foundation staff implicated. . . ."208

Following another exchange of letters, Gordon Cutler's response to rational enquiry merely confirmed suspicions about the dictatorial cult attitudes prevalent within the Foundation. After slamming down the telephone receiver on Kate Thomas when she approached him to arrange a face-to-face discussion about her expulsion, Cutler sent me a final letter, in which he curtly wrote:

"I apologise for the tardy reply: I have had more pressing business. . . I have decided not to support your application to the Open Community. Since my support would have been necessary for it to be considered in the first place, that is an end of the matter."209

It is relevant to note that some months after the exchange of the abovementioned correspondence, the Findhorn Foundation were preparing for an "October Event" entitled *WorldWork: Resolving Conflict and Creating Community*, described as "An Intensive Conference in Process-Oriented Psychology with Arnold and Amy Mindell."210 Those, however, who were familiar with the concepts of process-oriented psychology,²¹¹ considered that in view of the treatment meted out to Kate Thomas, the Foundation had revealed themselves as rank hypocrites. My forthright letter drawing public attention to the hypocrisy in evidence appeared in the local press:

"Having been haughtily informed by Judy Buhler-McAllister, the Director of the Findhorn Foundation, that she has 'no intention of entering into long and time-consuming correspondence' with myself—over the serious issue of Kate Thomas's expulsion—and that any letters 'will remain unanswered,' I must appeal to the Press to allow me to comment on the utter hypocrisy evidenced by Ms. Buhler-McAllister.

"In the current issue of *One Earth* magazine, there is an advertisement for a Foundation-hosted Conference entitled *Resolving Conflict and Creating Community*, to occur in

October, and promoting the Process-Oriented Psychology of Arnold Mindell. In this advert, the Foundation declares: 'As a living community, we are consciously trying to practise a more effective way of co-operative living...' Further rhetoric informs that the concern of the Conference is with 'deep democracy,' which 'aims at facilitating the expression of various parts of a community; the more conventional ones as well as those in disagreement with majority consensus.' In the light of the above, Ms. Buhler-McAllister's despotic act in arbitrarily denying Kate Thomas Community membership of the Foundation, and also the right to a democratic voice within that Community, must be realistically viewed as very shallow democracy indeed, and is in fact the behaviour of an outright hypocrite."²¹²

The views of critics seemed justified when Betsy van der Lee, a Foundation community member who had participated in the Conference, wrote: "... at the end of the day I am still left with the following questions. Although we came together ostensibly to do 'WorldWork: resolving conflict and creating community,' what actually was our aim? How interested in, or willing were we, as a group, to really get to grips with any of the issues we touched upon? How committed were we to resolving conflict or to creating community?"²¹³ I trust that the foregoing documentation has provided an answer to the questions raised by Betsy van der Lee.

In February 1994 it was reported by Elizabeth Taylor of the *Forres Gazette* that "author of *The Destiny Challenge* and critic of holotropic breathing, Kate Thomas, is shocked at having been dropped from membership of the Findhorn Foundation.... She had become an open community member of the Foundation [in July] last year," wrote Taylor.²¹⁴

"Within the same week," continued the article, "the writer's fellow-researcher into the controversial therapy, holotropic breathing, Mr. Stephen Castro, learnt that his application for the same category of membership had also been dropped... despite what he insists was a 'successful' interview in January."

Elizabeth Taylor reminded readers that Kate Thomas "had a run-in with the Foundation when her book *The Destiny Challenge* was published 18 months ago."

"Outlined in the book," continued Taylor . . . "was a chapter on the Foundation, including a critique of the dangers of holotropic breathwork."

"Immediately following its publication the book was sent to the Foundation's Edinburgh solicitors."

"However no basis was found for legal action, which led to accusations of over-reaction on the part of the Foundation."

"Also contained in the book was the episode of former member Gemma Whibley, who, it was claimed, left the New Age centre in the summer of 1991 and was diagnosed by a GP as 'suffering acute shock and emotional stress.'"

"Ms. Thomas believes that a question about whether Gemma's case had ever been formerly investigated led to her [Thomas's] recent expulsion."

"Miss Thomas said she had understood from [a Foundation] administration official that an internal inquiry had been held, and had asked what the findings were plus how it could have been held without Gemma being present."

"She referred to a signed statement by regional councillor Mr. Robbie Laing and a GP stating that a Foundation spokesperson had told them an enquiry had been held, and no further action was to be taken in the matter."²¹⁵

In the abovementioned signed (and witnessed) statement from Robbie Laing (dated 22nd Jan. 1994) obtained by Dr. S. J. Darke, it was stated that Councillor Laing had "raised the matter concerning Gemma Whibley with Loren Stewart in August 1992, and was promised that there would be an enquiry."

"A week later," the statement continued, "Councillor Laing telephoned Loren Stewart to ask if a date for the enquiry had been made. It had not, but Loren contacted him later to tell him that the enquiry was to be held the next day."

"After the enquiry [in August 1992], attended by the

membership of the Findhorn Foundation (it is understood) and definitely attended by two or more Trustees, Alex Walker (a Trustee) telephoned Councillor Laing to say that an internal enquiry had taken place and a conclusion satisfactory to the Foundation had been reached. This conclusion was 'that there was no need to take any further action over the matter of Gemma Whibley; the Foundation regarded this matter as being closed.'" This was the enquiry mentioned by Nash to Thomas.

In 1992 a letter had appeared in *The Northern Scot* from the retired GP who had assisted Gemma Whibley. It provides a graphic insight into the biased attitudes of those who held the enquiry:

"Your readers might like to know that in my efforts to pursue the unresolved issue of Gemma Whibley with the Trustees of the Findhorn Foundation, the following occurred.

"1. Alex Walker, when approached, declared the material presented by Kate Thomas in Chapter 14 of *The Destiny Challenge* was wholly distorted—this, despite the fact that he had personally read no more than 'a few' pages. I proffered him the gift of a book, which he declined, as he had no wish to read the chapter referred to, and had already formulated an opinion as to its content.

"2. Mary Inglis, another Trustee, knew nothing of the matter relating to Gemma, nor of the promised investigation. She agreed, however, to accept a free copy of the book, which I delivered within the hour. Upon later enquiry, it was discovered that she had not read more than 'a few' pages, nor did she propose to. She declined to discuss how she viewed the matter, nor would she answer a question about consensus of opinion and whether the membership of the Foundation was aware of the case at all.

"This brings into serious question the integrity of Trustees and senior staff of the Findhorn Foundation, which is, after all, an educational charity and answerable to the public."²¹⁶

In the letter informing Kate Thomas of her expulsion,

Foundation Director Judy Buhler-McAllister dismissed the question raised by Thomas regarding the results of the enquiry held by the Foundation about Gemma Whibley, with the statement: "Personally, I grow impatient with the relentless manner in which you pursue these issues . . ." ²¹⁷ She further stated, "...in reading your book, it is quite clear to me you have a very specific methodology and approach to the spiritual life. I acknowledge that this methodology of meticulous questioning and reflection has proven valuable to yourself and your students. However, this single pointed focus is at odds with the predominant approach taken here in the Foundation." ²¹⁸

Apart from the unanswered question about Gemma Whibley, another factor which contributed to the expulsion of Kate Thomas was indicated in the concluding paragraph of Judy Buhler-McAllister's letter. This was a reference to Associate membership: "I understand from Loren [Stewart] and Jill [Brierley] that an interview scheduled for Tuesday the 25th of January was intended as a review of your Open Community membership and an attunement to your becoming an Associate member. Given the content of this letter and their support of the position I have now taken, that meeting is cancelled." ²¹⁹

This whole matter was thus handled in a very questionable manner by elite staff members who were averse to "meticulous questioning and reflection" (i.e., standards and ideals). Having no conscience with regard to the case of Gemma Whibley, their avoidance of ethical issues is not rendered the more glamorous here by due reflection upon what they were trying so desperately to avoid. If Kate Thomas had become an Associate member of the Foundation, she would have been entitled to work at Cluny Hill College, and might have expressed more "meticulous questioning" of dubious events that she observed. A community with much to fear will tend to screen out any possible objectors.

An instance of what should have been questioned more

strongly by the Foundation staff was visible by October 2nd, 1993. On that day, Kate Thomas went to Cluny Hill College to collect a guest brochure, and as she was about to leave, she observed in the foyer an anomaly difficult to overlook. An "October Event" was advertised on the notice board entitled *Bridging the God Gap*. A number of people had put their names to the relevant sheet and indicated the nature of their participation in what was supposed to provide a bridge to God. One person had described his efforts in terms of "bonking Sue." Now the "Sue" in this lewd reference was none other than Sue Miles, the overall focaliser then in charge of Cluny Hill College, and the juvenile lavatory smut was penned by her long-term boyfriend, Steven. The crude testimony was on open view to Foundation members and guests alike. Thomas felt obliged to report the matter to the focaliser Loren Stewart, who eventually confronted the man who had penned the irregularity, and requested that he remove the offending words. Yet Stewart himself was not really concerned about such a matter, and tended to resent the episode as one of interference by Thomas. Stewart was already a major opponent of Thomas in the internal politics of the Foundation. He had a long-standing staff role that gave him prominence, and though he was not liked by everyone in the Foundation, his views were influential. Staff members like himself did not want bad conduct exposed, and so they vilified Thomas, whom they feared as an agent of criticism and rectification.

The *Bridging the God Gap* conference had been described in an article by Kathy Tyler, the event's principal organiser, as "an intentional opportunity to restructure our spiritual realities . . ." ²²⁰ Perhaps the Foundation would have been better occupied restructuring their social realities.

Kate Thomas had run into similar problems when encountering other incongruities evidenced in the "spiritual community," such as the time when a staff member advertised himself as being available for "casual homosexual sex" in *Rainbow Bridge*, the Foundation's internal weekly news-

letter.

Even when she corresponded with the individual in question three years later, he still remained wholly unrepentant—despite his recent marriage to a member of the opposite sex. In her reply to a letter from Thierry Bogliolo, who quite evidently still considered that the Foundation was a “sacred space” for individuals to explore their sexuality, Thomas wrote:

“Your brief inclusion in chapter 14 of my book was legitimate in view of the context. You are a senior staff member holding a position of considerable responsibility in an organisation which repeatedly states that it is spiritually based and an ‘evolutionary spearhead’—a place of education and progression in spiritual growth. One that, furthermore, has achieved the status of an educational Charity. Yet despite your position, you are advocating casual sex of a homosexual nature in the internal magazine available to all Living in Community Guests (LCG’s), and permanently on display to newcomers in Cluny Hill College lounge . . .

“You must be aware that the governments of the world are attempting to inform the public of the current dangers of casual sex and promiscuity in order to halt the massive and largely unperceived increase in AIDS and HIV, which is transmitted principally through homosexual and bi-sexual encounters of the above nature. (According to top medical authorities, not to me—the problems in Africa have been traced to anal sex, where it is used for the purposes of contraception). If, to you ‘a sacred space for personal research and spiritual practice’ means having the freedom and opportunity to involve yourself in casual homosexual relationships in a climate of irresponsible non-criticism, then you and I definitely do not agree on the definition of sacred, nor the use of the word ‘spiritual.’”²²¹

In March 1994, Kate Thomas managed to arrange an interview between Eric Franciscus and herself to discuss the possibility of a meeting between Franciscus and Gemma Whibley—the latter being most anxious for this to take place.

Thomas reported the interview as follows:

"On March 29th 1994, I met Eric Franciscus by prior arrangement at a café in Forres. He had consented to meet me outside Foundation premises (as I was not allowed inside Cluny Hill College, where he lived and worked) in order to discuss the possibility of a meeting between himself and Gemma Whibley, at her request. Franciscus insisted on tape-recording the discussion, and was therefore very cautious in most of his comments. His prime wish was apparently to 'help' me to adjust to my expulsion and to accept it as the will of the Universe. My response that it seemed to me rather the will of Judy Buhler-McAllister and Loren Stewart was conveniently by-passed.

"A copy of the tape is now in my possession. It contains no direct answers to any of my questions, and a great deal of prevarication on the subject of Gemma [whom in fact he never did meet]. In the course of the conversation I managed to ask why he had originally vetoed my Associate membership in the first place, i.e., in July 1991 (and he did not deny that he was the only person to do so). He replied that he 'didn't know why'—that 'these things come and go' and are matters of the 'present moment.' He relied upon intuition, which might tell him one thing one day, and the reverse on another. For instance, he might not make the same decision *now*. When pressed, it appeared he couldn't remember the actual reason for his veto, and said there may never have consciously been one. He did not always know *why* he did what he did—it depended upon the mood of the moment. In view of the fact that Franciscus held the highly responsible position of Director of Education at the time, this seemed to me an extraordinary way to conduct the affairs of a College which carried the status of an educational charity."

Three months after the article about the expulsion of Kate Thomas from Open Community membership, a further report by Elizabeth Taylor of the *Forres Gazette* appeared:

"Former Findhorn Foundation member Gemma Whibley

has failed in her bid to arrange a face-to-face interview with senior Foundation officials about the events surrounding the abrupt termination of her membership three years ago.

"And she feels that her case is linked with that of author Kate Thomas, who has been equally unsuccessful in her efforts to meet those who could explain why she herself was summarily ejected from the Foundation earlier this year."²²²

Taylor informed readers that: "During a meeting with Ms. Buhler-McAllister, Miss Whibley recounted the events leading up to her abrupt withdrawal from the Foundation and asked if the retired GP who had taken her into her Forres home at the time could be allowed into the meeting to verify facts. [The GP was waiting within the Foundation's precinct for this purpose].

"This was refused. Miss Whibley also asked if minutes of an enquiry into her departure, which had the backing of local councillor Mr. Robbie Laing, were available. She was told there were no official minutes."

According to the *Gazette*, "Kate Thomas has been given to understand by Foundation Director Judy Buhler-McAllister that she has no intention of setting up a formal meeting to provide 'a forum to challenge the decisions and perceptions' of the Foundation's staff.

Speaking on the subject of her expulsion, Kate Thomas "said she had asked what was being done about Miss Whibley's request for a meeting, centred on what Ms. Thomas called Miss Whibley's earlier 'victimisation.'

"As soon as I asked a question about Gemma, I was out,' she said.

"They would not allow me to raise any past event—that subject had to be dropped."²²³

The following month the local press reported that "Forres author Kate Thomas is following up, with the Scottish Charities Office, claims that a file is being kept on her at the Findhorn Foundation."²²⁴

The article continued: "Since being rejected from membership of the Foundation in January, Ms. Thomas has been

battling for a hearing where the reasons for her expulsion could be explained. . . .

"Ms. Thomas said she had been given to understand that a notice had been printed in the Foundation's internal weekly newsletter, *Rainbow Bridge*, to the effect that anyone seeking more information about her should refer to the Foundation's personnel department. . . .

"A spokesman at the Foundation, however, said that *Rainbow Bridge* had contained a series of minutes from a meeting of the Foundation's administration group, during which Foundation Director Judy Buhler-McAllister had said that anyone wanting to know more about Ms. Thomas should go and see her personally.

"Foundation officials have flatly refused to discuss the existence of a file or the form of the 'information.'"

Also mentioned was the fact that a colleague of Thomas had written to the nine Trustees of the Foundation "asking if they would initiate an enquiry." However, "the response of Foundation-based Trustee Mary Inglis was that the Trustees were happy with the way the matter was being handled by the Foundation's Director."

The article again raised the issue of Gemma Whibley, who was reported to have ". . . also repeatedly requested that she be given a hearing at which senior officials present at the time of her departure could be present. She says she has received letters from those concerned, offering her forgiveness and apologies—but no meeting.

"One official [Eric Franciscus] said he was 'attempting to go to the heart of the matter rather than argue about the facts.'

"He said a meeting would aggravate the situation, and joined with other Foundation staff in refusing further contact.

"In response to enquiries from the *Gazette*, Foundation chief Mr. Patrick Nash said the matter concerning Ms. Thomas was closed. He said that the Foundation Director was taking responsibility for the matter, but that she was not available for comment."²²⁵

When Gemma Whibley later attempted to rejoin the Community Apprentice Programme, she was informed by Catherine Bischoff, the CAP Coordinator, that: "Considering the manner in which you left the CAP programme previously, we do not consider it appropriate for you to recommence the programme and to form this sort of relationship with the Findhorn Foundation."²²⁶

Bischoff (South African) had evidently chosen to ignore the fact that Whibley (who was reared in Scotland) had previously left the Foundation under medical supervision and in a state of acute distress, and that she had also parted with a quite considerable sum of money whilst at the Foundation. In a statement (dated 16th June 1994) to the Scottish Charities Office, Whibley wrote:

"When I arrived at the Foundation, in February 1991, I took the obligatory Departmental Guest (DG) week, at a cost of £90. This led to two months on the Living in Community Guest (LCG) programme. These LCG months are a prerequisite and preparation for possible selection and acceptance onto the Community Apprentice Programme (CAP), and I was accepted. The fees for the LCG months were £570. The CAP programme is a two year commitment, at a minimum fee cost of £3000, the first quarter payment of £750 I had already paid. . . . For me these sums of money involved, a total of £1410, were considerable, and were a very heavy toll on my savings. After six months of my time, efforts, and costs I have been left with nothing. I have received no satisfaction, let alone sincere regret, from Eric Franciscus and other Foundation staff over the way I was treated and the fact that I *had* to leave under severe distress."

In reply to the public statement of Patrick Nash, I wrote to the editor of the *Forres Gazette*. My published letter contained the following:

"Rather than prevaricate like Mr. Nash, I will speak plainly on the 'justifications' given by Judy Buhler-McAllister, the Director of the Findhorn Foundation, for her arbitrary expulsion of Kate Thomas from Community membership.

"As stated by letter to Ms. Thomas on April 14, 1994, these were: a. because the 'Charities Commission intervened' [about the Breathwork] and 'your actions contributed significantly to that intervention'; b. 'the publication of your book with its condemnations of the Foundation and various individuals within it'; c. the 'opinions, assessments and personal experiences of various [Foundation] staff members.'

"Now, the intervention of the Scottish Charities Office—over the serious issue of Holotropic Breathwork—was due to public concern and a commissioned report from Edinburgh University. That report emphasised the potential dangers of hyperventilation, a matter for which Ms. Buhler-McAllister evidences no respect, as Holotropic Breathwork is still commercially practised within the precinct of the Foundation, and was recently advertised on widely distributed leaflets bearing the Foundation's full name and address.

"*The Destiny Challenge* is primarily an autobiographical record, yet also draws attention to important sociological issues such as individuals who advertise themselves as available for 'casual homosexual sex' in a charitable organisation, the dangers of Holotropic Breathwork, commercial 'spirituality,' and many more concerns, besides. It should be noted that Ms. Thomas was nevertheless accepted for Open Community membership one year *after* the publication of her book.

"To date, neither the Director nor any staff member of the Foundation has actually stated the substance of the aforementioned 'assessments,' let alone substantiated them, despite repeated requests. I therefore now publicly challenge any member of the Findhorn Foundation to coherently state and substantiate an 'opinion' or 'assessment' against Kate Thomas that is a valid reason for her expulsion from Community membership."²²⁷

Neither the Director of the Foundation, or anyone within the membership, took up the challenge. There was, however, an anonymous, acerbic letter published by the *Gazette* from a person who declared that he/she was "not a Foundation

member, or even a community member . . ."²²⁸ This person stated that "Most official bodies, charitable or otherwise, would prefer not to have factions within their ranks who are openly negative towards them," and that Kate Thomas should "stop wasting her energy trying to undermine and denigrate an organisation which has an established momentum, and take her services elsewhere, start her own community or affiliate herself to something which is closer to her own criteria . . ."²²⁹

After a few enquiries it was discovered by Kate Thomas that the "impartial" anonymous letter was penned by Carol Alexander, a woman who had in fact "a long-term close connection with the Findhorn Foundation" and was "listed as a contributing editor of *One Earth*, the official Foundation magazine."²³⁰ When Thomas duly conveyed the above information to readers of the *Gazette*, she added:

"The suggestion that I should take myself elsewhere (back to England, no doubt), and also that my views do not deserve attention, definitely does express the wishes and attitudes of the Foundation, who have consistently proved their unwillingness for any rational confrontation."²³¹

Then suddenly, an unexpected twist in events arose. In an attempt to ascertain the reasons for the expulsion of Kate Thomas from a stated category of Foundation membership, her solicitor had written to Judy Buhler-McAllister, and asked:

"Could you please let us have details of the reasons for expulsion of our client from membership of the Foundation including details of any matters giving cause for complaint against" Kate Thomas.²³²

Unable to answer the questions without implicating herself and the Foundation legally, Buhler-McAllister sought the advice of the Findhorn Foundation's own solicitors, Tods Murray of Edinburgh. The reply from Tods Murray, however, was to backfire upon the whole Foundation membership.

In an informative article, journalist Elizabeth Taylor of the *Forres Gazette* announced to readers:

"IT'S OFFICIAL—there is no such thing as membership of the Findhorn Foundation.

"The surprise declaration that the Findhorn Foundation has no members came from the New Age centre's Edinburgh solicitors, and is coupled with the declaration that no one apart from Foundation Trustees has any constitutional rights in the running of the experimental community.

"The statements have bemused local critics. If there are no members, what about the 200 or so people who are living and working on the communal site?

"Even more intriguing, how can the Foundation account for the prolific references to membership throughout its promotional literature, or justify courses costing as much as several thousand pounds to qualify for the ultimate status of full membership?

"A letter from Edinburgh firm Tods Murray came in reply to efforts by Forres author Kate Thomas to establish her right to a hearing after she was, as she understood it, 'expelled' from the category known as Open Community Membership.

"Ms. Thomas has been engaged in a long-running battle to win a meeting with senior Foundation officials to have the reasons for the termination of her membership explained.

"In their letter, Tods Murray have made it clear that there is no case to answer, because if there is no membership, Ms. Thomas cannot have been expelled. . . .

"The Open Community membership . . . was considered to be membership of a programme, and only a contractual relationship. . . .

"Ms. Thomas said that any other member, of whatever category, could receive what she called the same 'callous treatment' that she had received—despite giving up home and livelihood to live in the area—if there was no membership constitution to protect them, and no voluntary upholding of human rights.

"She added that she thought Foundation Director Judy Buhler-McAllister had gone to extreme lengths to deny her

a face-to-face hearing. 'That does not say much for her integrity or compassion, and the same must be said of her supporters. As the bastions of a *spiritual community* they are a mockery, and bring the entire concept of spiritual education into disrepute.'

Taylor went on to inform readers: "The solicitors stated that the Foundation is a charitable trust run by a body of Trustees who have delegated certain management functions to a committee of management.

"No one other than a Trustee or a member of the management committee has any constitutional status.

"Apart from employees and volunteer workers, who are members in the sense of being staff members, any other membership is purely a matter of personal contract between the individual and the Foundation, and relates to membership of a course or programme.

"This affects every individual who considers him-or herself to be a member,' said a local critic.

"The control of the Foundation is wholly in the hands of the Trustees,' he added. 'Decisions reached by the so-called membership amount to virtually nothing.'

Elizabeth Taylor then drew attention to the acute contradictions surrounding membership, and pointed out that: "In brochures readily available to the public, becoming a member of the Foundation has been clearly referred to, and described as 'a multi-staged process over a two-year period' in the form of a fee-paying Community Apprenticeship Programme, or CAP.

"On completion of the CAP, participants can apply for a full staff membership and receive a monthly stipend.

"The latest Foundation brochure declares that it has about 150 members living, studying and working together. It adds that membership is available through the CAP scheme, which can only be undertaken following investment of £1,500 in yet another course—the Living in Community Guest Programme."

The article concluded: "A guide to drawing up a consti-

tution for bodies with charitable status, published by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, says that those who join such groups must have the terms on which they can join explained to them.

"A person whose exclusion is contemplated should normally be given an opportunity for appeal,' says the guide.

"The Edinburgh solicitors statement also appears to be at odds with an [official] application submitted earlier by Miss Thomas entitled a 'Community membership registration form.'

"A meeting for members held last June in the Universal Hall to discuss decision-making structures aired the suggestion that those eligible to attend meetings should include both 'members' and 'open community members.'

"Also on the agenda were changes to the rules of 'membership.'"²³³

Following a cautionary letter from the Foundation's solicitors, Tods Murray, a "missive" from Judy Buhler-McAllister (dated 13th August, 1994) on the issue of "membership" appeared in *Rainbow Bridge*: This stressed to the community how "unwise" it would be to continue to use the term "Foundation membership," because it had no "legal existence."

Later, in a public reference to the issue of "membership" within the Foundation, Roger Doudna (the Foundation's "philosopher") stated that after taking "legal advice from our Edinburgh solicitors, the upshot was that we were advised that our formal constitution legally precludes 'membership' altogether! In view of this counsel, the Foundation Management immediately decided to delete all references to 'membership' in our literature and lingo. In the eyes of the law, it seems, what we have in this community is employees, students and volunteers."²³⁴

Observers were astounded at the lengths to which the Foundation elite were prepared to go to exclude any possible factor of confrontation with unresolved ethical issues which they strategically ignored as a charity-status organisation.

8. "Probe the 'Mafia' cult"

On Thursday, 19th January 1995, there appeared on the front page of the *Scottish Daily Express* the headline: PROBE THE 'MAFIA' CULT. The "cult" in question was the Findhorn Foundation, and the call invoked the Scottish Charities Office.

In an "exclusive" by journalist Ian McKerron, readers were informed:

"Charity watchdogs have been called in to probe a controversial New Age sect.

"The move comes amid a flood of allegations about how the Findhorn Foundation is being run.

"Former members have told the *Scottish Daily Express* that the organisation's image as an international centre of spirituality and social harmony is a sham.

"One ex-member, actor Howard Whiteson, said: 'What is presented to the outside world, and what actually goes on inside the Foundation, are poles apart.

"Forget talk of it being the forerunner to a Brave New World. The regime is more like something from Orwell's 1984. There are some extremely sinister things going on there.'"

Readers were further informed that: "Disquiet about the hierarchy's 'bully-boy' tactics reached a climax after respected sociologist and author of several books on spiritual development, Kate Thomas, was expelled without hearing last year. [Some people wrongly assumed that Thomas was a sociologist after reading her account of the Foundation].

"Anyone who has dared ask why she was expelled by the Forres-based Foundation, or shown any support for Ms. Thomas, has been targeted by the 'mafia.'"

The case of Gemma Whibley was then referred to, after which Ian McKerron told readers about the case of Jill Rathbone, who "gave up her home and job in Cambridge to take a post helping children with special needs at the Moray Steiner School in Forres."

"The School," continued McKerron, "although an independent charity in its own right, rents its premises from the Foundation. And several key members of the New Age group also send their children there."

"Mrs. Rathbone, aged 55, received her contract of employment last October. But when she arrived for her first day she was met in the car park by three school councillors and barred from entering the premises. She was told to go home and was later handed a letter stating: 'Due to unforeseen circumstances, we cannot now offer you employment.'"

"Mrs. Rathbone, targeted by the controversial sect as a dissenter because she once dared to question some of its methods, is convinced the school was pressurised by the Foundation to cancel her appointment."

"Mrs. Rathbone said: 'What happened to Gemma and Kate, and what has now happened to me, demonstrates that the people in charge of the Foundation will stop at nothing to eliminate anything or anyone they perceive as a threat. The hierarchy rules by fear. They don't want anyone questioning anything they do or say. Anybody who does is immediately targeted and ultimately pushed out.'"²³⁵

In the same issue of the *Scottish Daily Express*, the editorial opinion appeared under the title "Has Findhorn sold out to [the] god of money?" This commented:

"... that such complaints are being made at all against an organisation like the Findhorn Foundation is deeply worrying. The Foundation, after all, is a charitable trust and therefore has a duty to those who give to its funds to be seen at all times to be beyond reproach."

In an attempt to personally investigate the events mentioned in the above quoted *Scottish Daily Express* article, I approached Howard Whiteson and Jill Rathbone, two of the

individuals named by Ian McKerron who had been discriminated against by the Findhorn Foundation for their support of Kate Thomas. They provided me with documentation that both substantiated and also considerably enlarged the compass of McKerron's article. Their respective cases follow.

1. Howard Whiteson

On the 24th September 1994, Howard Whiteson sent a statement to the Scottish Charities Office describing the cult attitudes he encountered within the Foundation because of his former association with Kate Thomas. His statement is included here in full:

On 23rd August 1994, I wrote to the Findhorn Foundation requesting a place on a Community Apprenticeship Programme (CAP). I detailed the skills I thought I could bring to the Foundation: that I was a professional actor (aged 33), director and writer; that I spoke both Spanish and Catalan (Spanish was used during some of the Foundation's Experience Week programmes). A few days later I received a photocopied reply detailing the rules for membership, along with a general letter stating that the whole issue of membership was "under question."

At the same time I also wrote a letter from Cambridge to the *Forres Gazette*²³⁶ in reply to an anonymous letter which had appeared in the August 3rd issue.²³⁷ I felt this anonymous letter was a character slur on Kate Thomas, whom I had known as a teacher. Although I had not seen her for five years, when I returned to Cambridge [from Spain, where Whiteson had taught English for several years], on enquiry I was told of the problems she had encountered within the Findhorn Foundation by a former student like myself of The Cambridge Research Centre for Metaphysical and Evolutionary Studies (CRC), of which Kate Thomas was at that time the Director of Studies. [Whiteson had been a student for six months]. I wrote my letter to the *Forres Gazette* from

an independent viewpoint, in an objective a way as possible.

I waited some time for a reply to my CAP application but, receiving none, I rang the Foundation's Accommodation Department and requested entry onto a Departmental Guest (DG) week, as this was a means to discuss my CAP application face-to-face with the Foundation during the DG week. I paid the deposit, and travelled to Forres, Scotland, arriving there on 16th September, a day before the DG week was due to start. When I entered the Foundation's Community Centre, one of the first Foundation staff members I met was Loren Stewart, an American. Given his unfriendly attitude towards myself on my last stay at the Foundation in 1989, I was a little apprehensive of him, but he merely said "Hi" and moved off. The next day, however, after I had registered on the DG programme, I approached Loren and he said "You're a friend of Steve's, right?" I told him I was, and that I was amazed he could recall my face after five year's absence. He wanted to know what I was doing in the Foundation, and I told him that I'd gone for an initial DG week, as this was the necessary preliminary for a more extensive stay towards membership. He asked if I was still "with Kate," meaning a student of CRC; I said I was not. He said there was a lot of conflict which had built up with her and there was even going to be a court case—and that he didn't want to "feed" that by having anyone in the Foundation connected with Kate Thomas. He said that Jill Rathbone had come on a DG week and was obviously looking for "information"; asking for back copies of *Rainbow Bridge* and generally asking questions around. I wondered what was particularly wrong with this—what information contained in *Rainbow Bridge* (the Foundation's internal weekly newsletter) would Loren be worried about Jill seeing? After all, a file containing back issues of the newsletter is always on display, and guests usually have access to it. However, I said nothing. Loren continued that although Jill Rathbone had applied for the Living in Community Guest programme (LCG), he'd turned her down because, as he put

it: "we (the Foundation management) can do that now." When I told him I wanted to go on the LCG programme too (a required three-month prelude to CAP), he said I'd have to see him (as he was the LCG focaliser) and "clear it" with him.

Ulrike, the DG group focaliser, was a pleasant enough German woman, whose main concern at the beginning of the week seemed to be that giving up sugar, wheat and dairy products made her ill. The administrative details of our DG week were thus sometimes not organised, but no one seemed to mind too much (myself included). I stated during a group "sharing" that I'd come up to explore the possibilities of membership, and on Sunday 18th September I was given an LCG application form to fill out. It became quite clear to me during the next couple of days that there was a place for me within the Foundation. At one of the Foundation community "sharings" [in this instance, a weekly internal entertainments evening] in the Universal Hall, Ike Isaksen, a former arts organiser for the Foundation, sat down next to me. We had originally met in 1989 when he was running the Foundation's theatre programme with his wife; we'd both trained at the same college which, I felt, gave us a particular bond. He told me he'd left the theatre programme and the Universal Hall Arts Centre to work on his own production of *Macbeth*. He said that, whilst dance and song featured in community "sharings," theatre, as such, was lacking. He recommended I speak to David Till, who was in charge of the "Universal Hall," now an independent company. I was to receive positive feedback from several other Foundation members when they learnt of my professional experience in theatre: these included a German woman named Ulla, who said the season was just beginning and everyone was "crying out" for such work; and others too, who all expressed positive feelings towards the idea. A man called Jordi mentioned that several of the Foundation's Experience Week programmes were attended almost 100% by Catalans, and thought I'd have no problem using my proficiency in Catalan

in this respect. With these kind of responses surrounding me, I felt very positive about my decision to return to the Foundation, and began seriously to consider ways in which I could work within the Foundation: some ideas included performing conjuring tricks in the Helios Café; directing a version of the Persian spiritual allegory *The Conference of the Birds*, working on theatre with children; on improvisation with teenagers and adults; etc., etc.

Only one factor disturbed me—that of Loren Stewart. His remark over the “pending court case” did surprise me, and when I went for a drink to catch up on old times with a friend, a onetime fellow CRC student who was living in Forres, he assured me that there was no court case pending but that information had been passed to the Scottish Charities Office, through a solicitor, concerning the arbitrary expulsion without a hearing of Kate Thomas from Open Community membership by the Foundation’s Director, Judy Buhler-McAllister. On the 19th, Loren approached me and said we’d have to arrange a meeting for the LCG interview—he said he’d come and find me; the same evening in the Community Centre he came up to me and said: “Wednesday; 10; in here,” in an aggressive and domineering manner. All I could manage was a quiet “okay,” and he fell into the dinner queue two places behind me. When I left the queue for a moment and went to return, he said most aggressively to the person standing between us, “Don’t let him back in.” I felt his petty aggression quite unnecessary, and dissonant with the propounded aims of a supposedly gentle, caring community; but I attempted to laugh it off and made no comment. The interactions did, however, serve to make me apprehensive, and in the DG group “sharing” [open discussion] the night before my interview, I brought up the matter. I said that it was complex, but that my former studentship with someone considered ill-favourably by certain members of the Foundation now threatened my entry onto the LCG programme, and that the interview was likely to be a “severe test” for me. Nobody on the DG week really knew what

I was referring to, although they were very sympathetic to my fears and anxieties. Ulrike, however, did know, and after the "sharing," we retired to a separate room for a private talk. I had not, for ethical reasons, mentioned the name of Kate Thomas at the group sharing, but I now did so. Ulrike had indeed heard of Kate Thomas, but didn't see how my support for her could affect entry onto the LCG programme. In fact, she was so certain, by the end of our talk, of my suitability that she assured me that should there be any problem between Loren Stewart and myself, she would request another "attunement" to clarify things.

Although I made no attempt to elicit information from anyone, the subject of membership was an issue of import and it arose several times in my presence. For instance, I worked in Cullerne gardens in the afternoon, and picked up a copy of *Rainbow Bridge* which was on display to guests. It was mentioned that membership was the "hottest" issue around, and the newsletter contained two articles of interest. One was by a woman who had once been a member and who'd entered the meeting regarding membership with another ex-member of twenty years' standing. She'd thought it absurd that they'd both been asked to leave by Eric Franciscus, because the meeting (about the non-existence of "membership") was—for members only!

Judy Buhler-McAllister, the Foundation's Director, had written a lengthy article on "membership," quoting the solicitor's letter which first brought the matter to a head. The article then went on to talk about the semantics of the word; how a dissonance between "legal" and "social/cultural" levels could lead to confusion or criticism. As far as I can remember, the article also said that Management Group had taken a decision that the word "member" must change, although no new names had been found, and that this article in *Rainbow Bridge* constituted notice of their decision. There was some lengthy breakdown of other factors relating to power issues and the emotive identification with the word "member." One "member," Rory O'Connell, later told me that

the meeting had decided that the term "member" had to go: to be replaced with something like "focaliser" and "employee." This hardly held the same tone of "belonging" to me—after all, the whole utopian myth of the Foundation in the eyes of both the media and the public is based on the image of the Foundation as a spiritual commune, not a business! But Rory seemed untroubled by what he saw merely as a change of terminology rather than status (true in a sense, as the status and privileges of "full membership" had never existed for any save the chosen few).

Wednesday 21st finally came, and I met Loren in the Community Centre, along with his LCG co-focaliser Terry Neal (an Australian), whom I hadn't seen since 1989. He was very pleasant, and told me, as we wandered across to the office where I was to be interviewed, how he'd only been back two and a half months, having married and spent some time in Australia. I was asked firstly to talk about my past, and I explained how, back in 1989 I'd only left the Foundation with the idea of taking a few months to earn some money before returning, but how I'd fallen in love, and gone to Barcelona where I had lived for nearly four years and taught English. I said that, although this was a nice lifestyle, it lacked a deeper, spiritual element, and that was why I'd applied to the Foundation: that I'd considered so doing a number of times previously but only now, some five years on, had I actually carried this through. I also stated that I was no longer a student of the Cambridge Research Centre for Metaphysical and Evolutionary Studies, nor had I any connection with those studies now, and that I hadn't met the Director of Studies, Kate Thomas, for five years. I told Loren about what my friend had said over our drink together, but Loren was insistent that solicitors were involved and legal proceedings pending. I said that I had a great deal of respect for my former metaphysics teacher, and Terry stated that he, too, had respect for Kate Thomas. Terry went on to ask why I'd chosen the Findhorn Foundation precisely, which seemed to me a rather strange question, seeing that his own

situation almost exactly paralleled my own re his recent return. I told him that I was in search of some kind of a base, that I'd initially returned to the UK because of my niece's leukaemia, but that I could no longer be happy with hopping from one place to another, and thought that in the Foundation I could fulfil both my spiritual and creative aspirations. So far in the interview, all had been fairly civilised, although I sensed Loren's mounting anger, and he finally picked up a copy of the current edition (Sept. 21st) of the *Forres Gazette* and asked about my letter in it. This was the very same letter I'd written five weeks earlier, and I had no idea it was in that Wednesday's edition! He said he was no longer angry with Kate Thomas—he was angry with *me*. I asked him which part of my letter he was referring to and he stated something about the "status quo" section, the concluding paragraph of my letter, in which I had written:

"There remains a comfortable group within the Foundation, and it is in their interests, not those of democratic process, to silence such as Kate Thomas and her supporters, who only resorted to the Press to gain the fair hearing consistently denied them by those wishing to maintain the Findhorn [Foundation] status quo of commercialised 'spirituality' without any self-appraisal when injustices occur."²³⁸

Throughout the ensuing conversation, Loren tried to get away from the specific nature of my appraisal by referring to "the Foundation," and I had to keep drawing him back to the point that only a few wished to maintain the status quo, not the Foundation as a whole, which I'd found a magical place and where I'd learnt a lot five years previously. Despite my efforts to state that I was writing in response to an anonymous letter which I felt distorted the issues, and that I was attempting to clarify the situation objectively, neither Loren or Terry seemed capable of assimilating the basic fact that I could be critical of certain procedures, and wished for Kate Thomas to receive a hearing, whilst at the same time being keen to join the Foundation as a member. I began to wonder if only "yes" men were allowed through the hallowed

portals. Rather than take on board this point, Loren stated several times that there was "no way" Kate Thomas would receive a hearing.

Loren seemed obsessed by a "conspiracy theory" in relation to Kate and people surrounding her. He stated that he found it ironic that he was the first to have met Kate Thomas in the Foundation and welcome her in—the one to say "yes" to her and "no" to her too. The one who also had to deal with Gemma Whibley, Jill Rathbone and myself. I replied that life was sometimes ironic. I combated his attempt to lump us all together, reiterating several times that I was here as an individual and would like to be taken on that basis. But when I quite openly stated such innocent facts as that I'd been in receipt of certain correspondence between various parties involved [borrowed from Jill Rathbone], he seemed to find this conclusive proof of conspiracy. He asked how I'd got hold of such correspondence, and I replied simply that I'd requested it out of interest. He'd earlier stated that I'd deceived him in the Community Centre because, when he'd spoken of the "court case" and Jill Rathbone and asked me what I knew of it, I'd said I knew nothing—that I'd been away for five years. I corrected him on this, and reminded him that I'd actually stated I'd not met Kate Thomas for five years, and was genuinely surprised by the apparent news of a court case. I think it was around then that Loren stated quite categorically that I wasn't going on the LCG programme "because of your support for Kate Thomas." He said I had no idea, from the correspondence alone, how many hours of work and meetings had gone into the subject of Kate Thomas. I said that was probably true, but the salient issue of her not receiving a hearing remained. I also thought at the time that so many hours would have been better spent actually talking to Kate Thomas, rather than about her. I said it was a basic human right that someone arbitrarily expelled from an organisation should have the right of appeal. Loren's reaction was to refer to a letter of Jill Rathbone's, where she'd used the same term

"human rights," which, according to his defective logic, "proved" his conspiracy theory. I hardly thought this answered my question. In fact, I increasingly had trouble holding any kind of coherent discourse at all with Loren. When he told me that he'd actually decided *before* the interview that I wasn't going on the LCG programme, this upset me still further. What then, I wondered, were we talking about?

I think it was at about this point that the stress became too much for me, and I broke down in tears.²³⁹ I should perhaps point out that this is not usual for me, and that it was caused by the persistent pressure. One of them mumbled something about tissues but both just sat there and watched me cry. I managed, through the tears, to say that I'd set my heart on membership, that I felt a need at the Foundation I could fulfil, and that I didn't want to be prejudged. I even appealed to Loren's humanity by asking him to give me a chance, but to no effect. I realised I had no chance of acceptance onto the LCG programme given Loren's rigid views and paranoia.

For his part, Terry still seemed uncertain why I wanted to become a member. "Putting the whole Kate Thomas issue aside," he said (thereby creating a dichotomy by definition), "why do you want to be here now? You've talked about a career, about getting a base, getting established, but why the Foundation? It's still not clear to me. I'm not hearing you." He seemed to be implying that Loren could be right, in that I'd chosen the Foundation for underhand reasons. So I restated my case as clearly as I could: I said that I'd reached a stage in my life when I needed a base, and that, for me, was fundamentally a spiritual base—that the Foundation was a place where I could express myself in creative and spiritual ways; that it was a magical place for me and that I appreciated the chance to move away from the aggression, hostility and competitiveness of the world, although I wasn't afraid of the world. At that point Terry said he had "heard" me "clearly," and seemed satisfied. But a little later on, he said I was "lost," and that if I was looking for a place

to shelter, then I'd find myself having a very rough time in the Foundation. I found this proposition offensive, given my clear record of academic and professional achievement, and stated that I had several options open to me, including my mother's established antiquarian book business, and that I was perfectly capable of taking care of myself in the world. I began to feel that all this deep probing of my psychology was rather "heavy" for what was ostensibly supposed to be an interview for entry onto an initial one-month LCG programme. I saw that Terry was continually searching for what he could use as a weak point, to try and dissect me in a most cold and calculating way. He said he'd spent time training people in Australia in sales achievement, and I could see this coldly analytical side of him come to the fore, although he kept covering himself by repeatedly prefacing his comments with: "This is not against you as a person, but..." or "This is not an attack, but..." and similar phrases, not all of which I can clearly recall. All this, it seemed to me, was hardly a fair interview process for the LCG programme. In fact, in the entire hour and a half of my interview we discussed the matter of LCG only once, and that was when Loren had gone out of the room to check on his son's health.

Loren asked if I thought I'd been supportive of the Foundation whilst I was there in 1989. I said that in 1989, I took part fully in the LCG work programme, and had indeed noticed that the doors of the Community Centre, which I'd varnished at that time as part of the maintenance team, were still in a state of fairly good repair. Loren seemed unimpressed and referred in particular to a magazine (*Confluence*) that Stephen Castro and I had produced: he asked if I thought this magazine supportive. I said I did, and asked him if he did. He said that he hadn't found it supportive. I was rather surprised by this, and reminded him (he had, in fact, forgotten) that we'd included a verbatim interview (taken from taped material) running to some five pages with the then Foundation Director, Craig Gibsone: that

I'd written an article to tie-in with the Foundation's *The Beauty of Surprise: Science and Mystery* Conference, titled Science and Mystery; my co-editor had produced another on dissipative structures (Chaos theory); that we had asked for and received several contributions from members; I gave as an example one particularly interesting article on the periodic table [a chart of elements, arranged in order of increasing atomic number]. I said I felt this magazine was a genuine attempt to unite the streams of science and mysticism (the magazine's title *Confluence* reflected this aim and was initiated with further issues in mind, although such a venture failed through lack of support by the Foundation Management Group!). I asked Loren if he'd liked the magazine and he said he hadn't. I said that it had perhaps attempted to introduce a more "rational" and "intellectual" component, and that science wasn't everyone's cup of tea. I thought, however, that his attempt to imply that I'd been "against" the Foundation from as far back as 1989 was rather a crass blunder, given the positive work I and my co-editor had done on the sole in-house scientific publication available at the conference. Perhaps Loren did not like the warning we printed below the interview with Craig Gibsone:

"The editors wish to make clear that they cannot endorse the personal views expressed in the interview on the subject of Holotropic breathing, and must warn the reader against indiscriminately applied breathing techniques that cause physiological distress."

Loren tried to imply a number of things which he was subsequently forced to either retract or abandon. He said that Gemma Whibley had gone around deliberately searching for people slandering Kate Thomas—although he later somewhat modified this statement. He said that Jill Rathbone was always asking questions—and how conflict always seemed to revolve about "people surrounding Kate Thomas."

My letter in the *Gazette* was again mentioned. I tried to point out that the letter represented my attempt at independent appraisal, a response to an anonymous, acerbic letter

which distorted facts. Loren responded most irrationally by saying that Kate Thomas knew who the anonymous person was [Thomas did not know the name of the writer of the anonymous letter until enquiries were made afterwards]. I replied that didn't matter—I'd written the letter and I didn't know who it was. He asked me what I thought the local Forres townspeople would make of all this. I really couldn't see the point of the question, and said, once more, that I'd written in reply to the anonymous letter. Loren then answered his own question by saying that people in Forres would love it; the *Gazette* for them was like a tabloid and they loved to read all the scandal. I found this attitude rather patronising, but said nothing as Loren continued. He said only "negative things" ever appeared in the *Gazette*—there were never any good things about the Foundation. I said that wasn't true, as, of course, he knew full well.

Around this time, Terry expressed his feelings that the meeting should end. I felt emotionally drained and shocked. Terry, however, wasn't quite finished. He felt the need, it seems, to further justify the rationale behind his decision not to allow me to participate in the LCG programme (taken, be it noted, before I'd even stepped into the interview room), by saying that I lacked clarity. That this was "nothing against" me, but there was a "fuzziness" about me. Conflict, Terry felt, was bound to arise once members of the Foundation connected me with my letter in the *Gazette* and Terry, in his magnanimity, thought it was for my own good that I didn't go on the LCG programme!

In a follow-up letter to Loren Stewart, Howard Whiteson sought an explanation for the reason why Kate Thomas was being denied the right to a hearing:

"... You persisted throughout my 'interview' (I use inverted commas because you stated quite openly that you'd decided beforehand I wasn't getting onto the LCG programme, thus rendering any interview process impossible) in telling me most emphatically that Kate Thomas was not, and nor was

she ever, going to receive a hearing. You asked me if I 'heard' you, and I told you that I did. You further asked me if I accepted this, and I told you that although I accepted it was your decision, I could not agree with it.

"I have 'heard' you, Loren. Now will you hear me? My question, quite simply, is this: Why is Kate Thomas not to receive a hearing?

"I would appreciate an answer from you, as this would help me in my recovery from what was a truly gruelling hour and a half 'interview' with you and Terry Neal. Between the pair of you, I was reduced to tears, Loren. I am not embittered by this, merely saddened that you chose to employ such infantile 'bully boy' tactics at a time in my life when 'caring' may have been more appropriate (I had, after all, just informed you of my little niece's leukaemia). . . ."240

There was no reply.

In his efforts to obtain a rational explanation as to why he had been denied entry into what was a commercial (i.e., fee-charging) Foundation LCG programme, Howard Whiteson pursued the matter with co-founder Eileen Caddy, Director Judy Buhler-McAllister, Trustees Lady Diana Whitmore, Alan Watson, Mary Inglis, and Michael Shaw, former Director Francois Duquesne, and the focaliser for Education Group, Richard Mark-Coates.

In a statement (dated 24th Sept. 1994) to the Scottish Charities Office describing his encounter with Eileen Caddy, Whiteson wrote:

"I left the Community Centre (CC) and saw Eileen Caddy (the Findhorn Foundation co-founder) out for a walk with a friend. I hesitated, unsure as to whether to approach, then I went up to her and said that my name was Howard and I was a friend of Kate Thomas, and could I have a moment of her time? She said, quite brusquely, 'No,' then added that her friend couldn't stand. I thanked her for her time. 'But I haven't given you any,' she said.

"I re-entered the CC to make a phone call and when I came out again, Eileen had just completed her walk round

the block with her friend. I approached her again and asked her for a little time. She asked me to wait on the stone wall outside the CC, whilst she took her friend into a caravan. Then she returned and sat next to me on the wall.

"As I had been turned down for the LCG programme because of my past association with Kate Thomas, I said that I'd asked everyone I could in the Foundation, but could get no reply as to why Kate Thomas had been expelled. Could she tell me? 'No,' she said, but then added, 'it was because of a book she wrote.' I countered this with the statement that the book had been in print long before (over a year, in fact). She then said, 'It was because Kate Thomas was a nuisance,' that Kate Thomas 'hadn't fitted in the Foundation, and that was that. . . .'

"I asked her directly if she thought Kate Thomas deserved a hearing, and she said that she didn't. She also said that Kate Thomas wanted to 'take over the Foundation.' I said that her irrational remark was utter nonsense.

"I asked her if Kate Thomas would ever get a hearing, and Eileen replied, 'No, never,' with an insistence of similar magnitude to Loren Stewart's. I asked why not, and she repeated the sentence about Kate Thomas being a 'nuisance' and everyone being fed up with her.

"I finally asked Eileen if this whole approach to Kate Thomas wasn't undemocratic, and she said things didn't have to be democratic: that she knew God 'watched over' the Foundation. I walked away, saddened at the thought that Eileen Caddy is considered by the thousands who go to the Foundation to be a great spiritual figurehead, a promoter of 'unconditional love'—if only they knew the truth."

Howard Whiteson received similar illogical, evasive, and quite obviously unfriendly responses from all the Foundation officials he approached. One of the Foundation Trustees, Lady Diana Whitmore, known for her involvement with the Psychosynthesis & Education Trust, sent a haughty reply (dated 6th December 1994) to his plea for an impartial enquiry into his rejection, which stated:

"I am writing in response to your letter of 25th October and your numerous phone calls. As a Trustee of Findhorn, I want to say that these matters are handled by the Foundation management and I fully support the current management. In future, would you kindly refer your letters to them."

In response, Whiteson wrote:

"I was extremely surprised to receive your reply today. Given that it has taken you several weeks to answer my appeal, I would have thought that you would be able to write more than a few lines of standard Foundation jargon. You, like all the others, say that you 'support' the management committee. You, like all the others, give me absolutely no reason for this support. As you have, I understand, only fairly recently been made a Trustee, I hoped that you would not yet be totally indoctrinated with their viewpoint, but it seems my hope was in vain.

"You refer to the fact that these matters are handled by the Foundation management. Well, I wrote not at my own instigation, but at the suggestion of Judy Buhler-McAllister, as I pointed out in my letter to you. It is a known fact that Trustees have the power to deal with such matters, and I wrote to you in the hope (also, it would seem, a vain one) that you would bring up this matter with management, as it was Loren Stewart in particular who I felt had acted badly towards me.

"You also refer to my 'numerous phone calls.' Let me just state here that the three or four calls I made were in an effort to speak to you about my letter, as you had made no reply to me. On the second such call, I followed the advice of the receptionist and left a message for you, to which you made no reply. I never actually spoke to you on the phone, which your letter implies.

"I must also say that, given your affiliation with psychotherapy, you have turned me away in a rather insensitive manner. I would have thought that you, of all people, would have been able to recognise the distress I had suffered at

the Foundation, and would not therefore have sought to pass the buck in the brusque manner you have chosen. I would have thought it a principle of Psychosynthesis, if not as a Trustee of the Foundation, to help those in need as much as possible. Perhaps you only offer such help to those who pay?" There was no reply from Lady Whitmore.

As a concluding portrait of the hypocrisy Howard Whiteson encountered within the Foundation, we will take a brief look at the acute disparity between contrived image and reality, as evidenced in the Foundation propaganda written by Richard Mark-Coates, then Director of Education.

In the Findhorn Foundation Guest Brochure for October 1994–April 1995, was an introduction to the brochure written by Richard Mark-Coates entitled *Love is also a Constant: Reflections on Education in Our Community*. He piously commented:

"... What does this place [the Findhorn Foundation] have that makes it so powerful? What is it that provides the gifts that people take away into their lives to bestow on their friends? I believe it is the 'welcoming space' here, the sense of coming home to oneself and God. . . . This, of course, is the very essence of this place; to allow love to permeate everybody and everything. Underneath the surface it is there, always. . . . Whatever we do, whatever we are, we strive to be inspired and led by love."

Howard Whiteson had written an appeal to Mark-Coates in the latter's capacity as Head of Education Department, in which Whiteson had requested "that another interview, with a different combination of people, would be only fair to me, given that I haven't really had an interview for the LCG programme at all. I am, therefore, appealing to you to consider my case, and hope that you can find it in your heart to give me a chance where Loren Stewart felt completely unable to do so."²⁴¹

The "love" received by Howard Whiteson from Richard Mark-Coates was exhibited in the latter's three-line response of 4th November 1994. It read:

"In response to your letter, I have talked to both Terry Neal and Loren Stewart, and I totally support and endorse their attunement and decision in this matter. I consider this matter closed."²⁴²

2. Jill Rathbone

According to Gilbert Childs in his study of the educational theory and practice of Steiner education: "All Rudolf Steiner Schools pride themselves in being 'free' (in the sense of being independent) . . . The independence they enjoy, and the autonomy it affords, is very highly valued; for strong feelings exist that the less interference by the State—or *any other authority for that matter*—the better, even if this means slow progress and financial hardship"²⁴³ (*italics mine*). Childs further asserted, "Steiner stressed that teachers must be individuals who never strike a bargain with untruth, that they must be profoundly and inwardly true . . ."²⁴⁴ What follows, revealed otherwise.

Jill Rathbone had first encountered problems with the Findhorn Foundation in June 1994 during a Departmental Guest week. In a later statement to the Scottish Charities Office, she described the cultic attitudes encountered when she tried to broach the subject of Kate Thomas [her former teacher] with Foundation members. She approached several members to ascertain their feelings on the matter of the arbitrary expulsion of Kate Thomas, to find that "no one was prepared to discuss the situation." She observed, "Either they listened with a glazed expression and said that they were unable to comment or withdrew with comments such as 'I'm not comfy with this' or 'this is not appropriate.' Either way the faces closed down and I felt I was talking to myself. Only one person said that she would like to know the truth, a Canadian member who runs a gay/bisexual group. However, during the conversation her attitude was that in talking to her she hoped I would feel better! Two other members present

at that time asked us not to have the conversation in their presence."²⁴⁵ In fact, any approach Jill Rathbone made to Foundation members on the issue of Kate Thomas was viewed by them as "intimidation," and when she tried to obtain back-copies of the Foundation's newsletter *Rainbow Bridge* to see if there was any mention of Thomas, she was told that only the copies relevant to the previous six weeks were available.

She concluded: "The members I talked to were not interested in facts and were prepared to believe what they are fed by the hierarchy, in fact they behave as if they have been brainwashed."²⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that the majority of the current membership have never met Kate Thomas, and have therefore formed opinions on the basis of what they have been told.

The month following her DG week, Jill Rathbone applied²⁴⁷ to the Foundation to join a four week Living in Community Guest (LCG) programme. In a reply from Foundation member Evelyne Droege, it was stated, "I have checked with our LCG-focaliser and it is OK [with] him that you start the LCG-programme . . . It is nice that you want to join us as an LCG and I am looking forward to hearing from you."²⁴⁸

On the 1st September, Jill Rathbone telephoned the Foundation to arrange a date for her commencement of the LCG programme and was informed that she needed to speak with the focaliser, who would telephone her back. Neither of the two focalisers in charge of the programme, Loren Stewart and Steve Kingham, did ring her back. Instead, the next day she received a curt letter from Loren Stewart, which stated:

"This letter is in regard to your recent application to join the Living in Community Guest Programme.

"In view of your association with and support of Kate Thomas and in the light of Kate's continual opposition to how we handle our affairs, it is inappropriate for you to participate in this programme."²⁴⁹

Jill Rathbone responded in reply:

"I had wanted to come to the Foundation because I agree with the principles and aims as set out in your literature. Now that I am free from family ties, I wanted to participate in and be part of a community with just these aims and principles. As you are aware, I have been participating in programmes at the Foundation for some years, the last being in June of this year. My hope was that the LCG programme would be the beginning of a long term commitment and I am, therefore, extremely upset by your rejection.

"With regard to your reference to Kate Thomas's 'opposition,' this has not been to how you handle your affairs, as stated by you, but has been to her expulsion without prior warning, discussion or a hearing despite having repeatedly asked for the latter. There has been no continual opposition to how you handle your affairs.

"I am in fact being discriminated against because I support someone on a human rights issue."²⁵⁰

There was no reply from Stewart.

Then, quite unexpectedly, Jill Rathbone received a letter from Mieke Wik, the administrator for the Moray Steiner School in Forres (a school founded by members of the Findhorn Foundation), offering her employment at the School as a part-time learning support teacher.²⁵¹

Jill Rathbone was at the time working in Cambridge at the prestigious St. John's College Choir School as an Assistant Matron and learning support teacher, and also at Hardwick Primary School as a learning support teacher and special needs assistant. She had applied to the Moray Steiner School the previous year regarding possible vacancies, as her intention even then was to move to the Forres area to join the Foundation community. In view of Loren Stewart's rejecting letter and the possibility that he might try to interfere with her new employment prospects, she felt it advisable to keep her solicitor informed of all further developments in her plans to teach at the School. Therefore, shortly afterwards, she sent the following statement:

"I have for sometime been making preparations to come

to Forres and to connect with the Community of the Findhorn Foundation, and hopefully make closer relationships, either as a resident member or one living close to the Community. With this in mind, and commitments here coming to an end (a foster child being relocated with his father), I wrote to the Steiner School in Forres over a year ago seeking employment, and was provisionally interviewed.

"It is in reply to this request that I have received a letter from the Moray Steiner School asking if I am still interested in working there, as a position has now become available, which indeed I am. I have spoken with Mieke Wik at the school and have written to her confirming this.

"However, in view of the content of my last letter to you [in which Jill Rathbone had queried Loren Stewart's right, on behalf of an educational charity, to ban her from the LCG programme], I fear that my position could be jeopardised by Loren Stewart, the school being closely connected with the Foundation."²⁵²

Three weeks later all seemed well. Mieke Wik, on behalf of the Moray Steiner School, had written to Jill Rathbone informing her that, "after having read two references written by your present employers, the College of Teachers of the Moray Steiner School is very pleased to employ you as our Learning Support Teacher." She added, "We are looking forward to meeting you, and welcoming you as a member of our staff."²⁵³

Delighted, Jill Rathbone accepted the position, informing Mieke Wik that "I have given formal notice at both schools here in Cambridge and look forward to starting with you the week commencing 24th October."²⁵⁴

However, still fearing that Loren Stewart might jeopardise her chances of acceptance into the Foundation community, she wrote the following letter to him:

"With reference to your letter of 2nd September I would ask you to please let me have some clarification.

"Four years ago I was living in the Forres area and was an Associate member of the Findhorn Foundation, a happy

and amicable arrangement which I felt was mutually beneficial. However, unforeseen commitments brought me back to Cambridge. These commitments now having come to an end, and having recently been offered, and in turn accepted, a position at the Moray Steiner School, I am returning to the Forres area and would like to renew my connection with the Foundation.

"I would, therefore, like to know exactly what the position is regarding myself and the Findhorn Foundation. As I am now barred from the Living in Community Guest programme I would like to know if the exclusion applies to Associate or Open Community membership, Experience Week and Departmental Guest programmes, Workshops, or indeed to anything else.

"I look forward to receiving your clarification."²⁵⁵

Whilst she awaited Stewart's reply, Jill Rathbone received another letter from the Moray Steiner School, one which this time indicated that the Foundation had been in contact with the School. Mieke Wik wrote, "I understand that you have recently been in contact with the Findhorn Foundation about joining programmes there . . . I would appreciate it if you could let us know the current state of your relationship with the Foundation and what steps you wish to take, if any, in relation to it. More importantly, I would like to know how you intend to work with the fact that some of the children you will be working with are children of parents at the Foundation, including possibly some of the management team there."²⁵⁶

Wik had also stated in her letter that: "The Moray Steiner School is a separate organisation from the Findhorn Foundation, but we do depend on a continuing good relationship we have with the Foundation and many of its members. The Foundation continues to support the school in many ways, for which we are grateful. Not least, they rent us Drumduan which allows us to operate here."²⁵⁷

[In 1990, Mieke Wik had in fact written in *Rainbow Bridge*, the Foundation's internal newsletter: "Although the school

is now legally independent from the Findhorn Foundation, we have no intention of cutting our links with the Foundation”].²⁵⁸

Disturbed by the change in Wik's attitude, Jill Rathbone sought to ascertain which Foundation officials were seeking to block her employment at the Moray Steiner School, and in a later statement to the Scottish Charities Office, she recounted:

“I telephoned Loren Stewart—no reply.

“I phoned Judy Buhler-McAllister. I left a message on her answerphone asking her to telephone me; she never did phone back.

“I phoned Patrick Nash, Head of Administration at the Findhorn Foundation, who I have never met. After preliminaries I said that I had received a letter from the Moray Steiner School and would like to know what was going on.

“Patrick Nash said I had referred in a letter to Loren Stewart that I had applied to the Moray Steiner School for a job. I replied that in my letter to Loren I had in fact written that I had been *offered* a job at the Moray Steiner School and that I had *accepted* the position. What I wanted to know was where I stood with regard to the Findhorn Foundation; Loren hadn't replied to my letter, and now I had received a querying letter from the Moray Steiner School. I explained that I had tried to reach Loren but there was no reply. I had, therefore, telephoned him (Nash) as Head of Administration.

“Patrick Nash said that he couldn't be responsible for all correspondence, couldn't know everything that was going on and that he didn't know why Loren hadn't replied. He then said, ‘Do you deny that you're involved with Kate Thomas,’ to which I replied that I had asked for Kate Thomas to be given a hearing. Whereupon Patrick Nash said that I should tell this to the Moray Steiner School and he didn't want to talk about it as he was cooking the dinner.

“I telephoned Meike Wik.

“I said that I had received her letter and was upset. That

I had previously had a good relationship with the Findhorn Foundation but had recently asked that Kate Thomas be given a hearing. Mieke Wik said that she hadn't followed the situation with Kate Thomas and she didn't know what the latter had done wrong. I said that neither did Kate and that is why I had asked that she should have a hearing. Mieke replied that that sounded very reasonable.

"Mieke knew I had written to Loren and said 'they' had asked her if she 'knew about this woman' i.e., me. I asked her who 'they' were and she replied Loren Stewart and Patrick Nash.

"I said that I had known Kate for many years, briefly explaining my connection with her through her grandchildren. [Rathbone had temporarily looked after Thomas's two school-age grandchildren when the latter's daughter died suddenly and tragically with leukaemia in September 1990. At the time, three senior Foundation staff members, including Loren Stewart, were told of her bereavement, but no-one from the Findhorn Foundation wrote to Kate Thomas, or offered condolences or the much publicised counselling. Thomas declined to write of the episode in her book, despite the harrowing months that followed in which she sought to comfort her distraught grandchildren. When reassured of their wellbeing, she reapplied for Associate membership—to be promptly vetoed by Eric Franciscus]. When Kate had been expelled early in the year I had asked that she be given a proper explanation and a hearing, as I felt it only right that she should be given one and I still stood by this. Mieke asked if Kate had received a hearing and when I replied that she had not, Mieke said that she agreed this seemed unacceptable but again said that she knew nothing about it. I said that I had done nothing wrong, all I had done was ask for a hearing. Mieke said that people don't often stand up for something they believe in; I replied that I had and that was all I had done.

"I pointed out that I had applied for a job at the Moray Steiner School before Kate's expulsion, and Mieke replied that

as far as she could remember my first connection had been about five years ago (in fact it isn't quite as long as that).

"I told her that I had given in my notices at the two schools in Cambridge, my notice to quit for my home, had taken a cottage in Forres, and that the removal firm was moving me to Forres on the 21st October. To which Mieke replied 'great' and she looked forward to seeing me.

"Mieke said that I shouldn't be upset by the letter, that she had been asked to write it and that for her 'all between us is clear and there is no confusion.' Please would I write what I had said in a letter to her."²⁵⁹

After reflecting on the conversation, Jill Rathbone telephoned Mieke Wik a second time, and on this occasion was informed that the letter Wik had sent her had "come" from Loren Stewart and Patrick Nash. "Mieke said that she had not been happy to write the letter," wrote Rathbone.²⁶⁰

"On Saturday 8th October," continued Rathbone in her statement to the Scottish Charities Office, "I telephoned Loren Stewart asking what my position is with regard to the Foundation. He said that Judy Buhler-McAllister had written three days after he had received my letter, a letter which I have not received, so I again asked Loren about the position. He stated that 'we have stopped dialogue with Kate Thomas and you have no relationship with the Foundation and no programme is open to you.' He added that this would continue for as long as I mentioned the name of Kate Thomas or asked questions.

"He said he knew nothing of a letter from the Moray Steiner School. He twice denied that he had had anything to do with it.

"I then telephoned Mieke Wik for clarification of the above as she had stated that Loren Stewart was involved, and she then said that Patrick Nash had approached her but it was her understanding that 'it came from both Patrick and Loren.' Mieke sounded guarded, uncomfortable, and not a little frightened.

"I telephoned Patrick Nash again to ask why this inter-

ference had happened, but he would only reply that it was because of my relationship with Kate Thomas. [Rathbone was formerly a provisional CRC student under Thomas]. I said that I didn't know what this had to do with the School. I told him that Mieke Wik had said that the letter had been instigated by him (who I have never met) and again why? I received the same reply with the addition that the School needed to know. I said that I have done nothing wrong so I didn't understand why I had to justify myself again and again. He then said that I always rang when he was cooking the dinner and that he wouldn't talk to me again. (I had left a message on his answerphone earlier in the day but he hadn't telephoned me back)."

In her concluding comment to the Scottish Charities Office, Jill Rathbone wrote: "Although the Moray Steiner School is supposedly an independent Charity (but with property leased from the Findhorn Foundation), it is apparent that there is pressure being brought to bear by outside bodies, i.e., the Findhorn Foundation Administration, simply due to my relationship with, and support for, Kate Thomas. This is influencing my employment prospects..."

The letter mentioned by Loren Stewart finally arrived, in which Judy Buhler-McAllister informed Jill Rathbone very briefly and in no uncertain terms: "Applications made by you to any Foundation run programmes will not be accepted."²⁶¹ Jill Rathbone was now effectively debarred from all the Foundation's programmes and public courses and workshops.

In the meantime, she had followed up her telephone conversation with Mieke Wik with the requested letter:

"With reference to your letter and our telephone conversations, I feel that I do need to know exactly where I stand. I have given in my notice at both schools here, and for my home, desiring to work in a spiritually oriented school combined with a spiritual community. As I am due to leave Cambridge on the 21st of this month, I really do need to know if I am going to have a job.

"I have been accepted by you on our past conversation at

your school and on the strength of my references, which you yourself said are excellent. As far as I am concerned I have a contract to start work during the week of 24th October.

"I understand that you are an independent school and wonder if you are in fact being influenced by outside sources . . ." ²⁶²

In reply, Mieke Wik wrote:

"In answer to your question of where you stand, or whether you have the job: the offer of the job is still open to you, if you want it.

"As is our usual procedure with new appointments, we would ask you to come to a meeting with the College of Teachers, before you start at our school . . ." ²⁶³

Jill Rathbone left her teaching positions in Cambridge, also giving up her home, and moved to Forres as planned, still with the understanding that part-time employment at the Moray Steiner School awaited her. In her report to the Scottish Charities Office of her meeting with the College of Teachers on Monday 24th October, on the same day she wrote:

"Having just completed my interview prior to starting teaching at the Moray Steiner School, I thought I should express my alarm at what I felt to be an irregular interview, especially after having been assured by Mieke Wik that the situation with the Findhorn Foundation would be kept a separate issue.

"The meeting, which I had been assured is regular procedure and informal, was attended by ten people, mostly teachers but I understand that at least two are members of the Foundation and called councillors. I was introduced and immediately confronted with the situation of my problem with the Foundation. I stated that I had no problem with the Foundation, that I had expressed my opinion on the matter of a hearing for Kate Thomas, as far as I knew I had done nothing more.

"There were repeated questions as to my feelings about the Foundation and I said that I had been an Associate

Member in the past and had enjoyed various programmes, that I had been accepted on a Living in Community Guest programme by the focaliser in charge at that time (before Loren Stewart intervened). This acceptance was subsequent to a week at the Foundation in June (when I had seen Mieke), but I had since been told that the LCG programme was full for the summer and to apply again in September. This application had later been refused by Loren Stewart, and only after the position at the school had been confirmed did I receive a letter from Judy Buhler-McAllister, the Director of the Foundation, refusing my admission to all programmes. This had been in reply to my letter to Loren Stewart, when I had written to tell him that I was coming to work at the School and asking what the position is as I had wanted to become an Associate Member (or whatever the equivalent is at the present time). I repeated that I had enjoyed my association with the Foundation and had wanted employment in a spiritually based school and association with a spiritually based community.

"I reiterated to those present that my problem was quite clearly not with the Foundation but with two or three members there who are evidently abusing their positions. I was asked to name the members and I said these were Loren Stewart, Judy Buhler-McAllister and possibly Eric Franciscus, and that Mieke had said that Patrick Nash was also involved.

"I was made to feel that I had somehow been devious in applying for and accepting the position at the school. When I said that I had only been banned from all Foundation programmes after my acceptance of the job offer, this was irrationally accepted by many of those present at the meeting as conclusive proof of my supposedly sinister motives.

"At one stage I was confronted with the factor of the letters in the press and I replied that I had written none of these. I was asked if I had had any contact with the press and I said that I had been in touch with Elizabeth Taylor of the *Forres Gazette* and she knew I had been excluded from the LCG programme by Loren Stewart.

"I was then asked if I would give an undertaking not to be involved with the matter of Kate Thomas in the future. It was suggested that this should be in writing. I said that I could not give such an undertaking and if I believed something was wrong, either in the case of Kate Thomas, or indeed any other matter, and felt I should stand up, I would do so. I explained that I had known Kate Thomas since 1985 when I joined CRC.

"I was asked that if I felt the need to protest and thought that the School might be affected, to talk with them first. I agreed this was more reasonable. I said that I had not come to make trouble for the School but to do a job and was told that the School is very sensitive to local opinion. . . .

"I was asked if I would accept the terms of the contract, which include a probationary period of one term, and I agreed. Only then was it agreed that I should start work on Wednesday 26th October.

"Whatever has been said by Loren Stewart and Patrick Nash has obviously affected my prospects, one lady fellow teacher in particular being more than covertly antagonistic, in fact I felt already on trial and not in a probationary way."²⁶⁴

By a strange quirk of fate, on the day that Jill Rathbone was to commence work at the Moray Steiner School, an article appeared in the *Forres Gazette* regarding Gemma Whibley's claim of a conspiracy against former associates of Kate Thomas by the Findhorn Foundation. The *Gazette* reported that "Cambridge-based Miss Whibley has tried to establish what she says would be a fair hearing into a series of events leading up to her departure four years ago, in a similar bid to that of Kate Thomas, who found herself barred from membership earlier this year.

"Miss Whibley," continued the report, "was concerned to learn of the refusal of entry to courses for a former associate of Kate Thomas, Mrs. Jill Rathbone, and London actor 33-year-old Mr. Howard Whiteson. . . .

"Mr. Whiteson claimed that it was during the session with

Mr. Loren Stewart that he learned his application for entry to a Foundation course had already been turned down, and the main bone of contention was a letter he had written about Ms. Thomas which had appeared in the *Forres Gazette* that morning. . . .”²⁶⁵

The *Gazette* concluded:

“Mrs. Rathbone has found herself rejected for a Foundation course—while at the same time being hired as part of the teaching staff at the Moray Steiner School, started by members of the Foundation with which it has always had strong links.”²⁶⁶

In a report written on the same day as the *Gazette* article, Jill Rathbone recounted:

“As arranged I arrived to commence work at the Moray Steiner School on Wednesday 26th October at 9:00 a.m. I arrived at 8:50 a.m. and was met in the car park by three people, one lady teacher who had chaired the meeting on Monday, one of the councillors, and the Chairman of the Council who I had not met before.

“I was not even invited into the school but was told without ceremony in the car park that, although they knew I had nothing to do with the article in the *Forres Gazette*, they felt I should go home while they reviewed the situation. The Chairman said that he hadn’t really understood the article and had had to read it twice.

“I asked what I had done wrong and they didn’t answer but looked embarrassed and then said that I was part of a ‘group.’ I denied this as I am not part of a ‘group’ and said that I had wanted to join the Foundation as had others.

“They then said that their situation was very difficult and felt I didn’t fully understand. To please go home and await a phone call.

“I said that I had given up my jobs and my home to come and work with children and I hadn’t done anything wrong. I left close to tears.

“I later received a phone call from one of the three (Chairman Anthony Kinnegen) to say not to come in to work

as they were consulting solicitors. I asked how long this would take and he replied that he did not know. The tone was harsh, withdrawn and non-communicative."

The following morning Kinnegen wrote and delivered by hand a letter to her, which simply read:

"Due to unforeseen circumstances, we cannot now offer you employment at the Moray Steiner School."²⁶⁷

Nobody from the school enquired into Jill Rathbone's financial position after her arbitrary dismissal, nor made any enquiry as to the effects on her health of this stressful and emotive incident. In fact, whenever she encountered any of the Steiner School teachers in the Forres High street, they ignored her.

That the Findhorn Foundation had influenced the Moray Steiner School was apparently beyond dispute. Apart from the fact that Patrick Nash sat on the School Council, in a statement given to Jill Rathbone by Findhorn Foundation resident June Woods (sent with the latter's permission to the Scottish Charities Office), it was said by Woods that "due to a conversation I had with Katarina Brocke—Park focaliser, and a good friend of mine . . . Katarina told me one of the reasons that Jill was not given the job [at the Moray Steiner School] was because Judy Buhler-McAllister, the Focaliser at present of the Findhorn Foundation, did not wish her son to be taught by anyone closely connected with Kate Thomas."²⁶⁸

In February 1995 the *Forres Gazette* informed readers that "a writ for compensation has been served on the Moray Steiner School in Forres by a teacher who found the school doors closed to her when she turned up for work there."²⁶⁹ What readers were not told was that the Moray Steiner School had refused to accept the original serving of the writ issued by the local Sheriff of the law courts, who, therefore, intervened by freezing the monies of the Steiner School by public ceremony at their local bank. Later, a registered letter containing the writ and delivered to the School was returned to a local solicitor because nobody at the Moray Steiner School

would sign for it. Eventually, a third attempt was made by the Sheriff's clerk who delivered the writ by hand and thereby enforced acceptance by the School's representative.

Following the *Gazette* article, Jill Rathbone wrote to Foundation Trustee Lady Diana Whitmore, requesting that the Trustees²⁷⁰ hold an investigation. She wrote:

"Please find enclosed a copy of an article concerning myself which appeared in this week's *Forres Gazette*. As Judy Buhler-McAllister, one of your fellow Trustees of the Findhorn Foundation, is implicated in the interference of one charity by another, and I have received no explanation from the Moray Steiner School, I would ask you to please make an investigation on my behalf.

"I would be pleased to supply any further information and look forward to hearing from you."²⁷¹

A reply from Lady Diana Whitmore, written on an air-mail letter with a London postmark, informed Jill Rathbone that "Being a new Trustee of Findhorn I will have to contact other Trustees, to ascertain an appropriate response to you. You will hear from me in due course."²⁷²

Jill Rathbone never did "hear" from Lady Diana Whitmore—despite three further letters sent by Rathbone and her solicitor. Lady Whitmore evidently felt that the "appropriate response" was to ignore Jill Rathbone's plea for help, support Judy Buhler McAllister and her confederates, and remain silent. Lady Whitmore is a former staff member of the Esalen Institute, California, and has written: "My experience is that the spiritual path has its own unique set of pitfalls, developmental issues and pathologies, its own tendency to stimulate and energise shadowy things in us."²⁷³ Quite.

On the 27th January, Jill Rathbone wrote to Christopher Clouder, Chairman of the Steiner Schools Fellowship in Forest Row, Sussex, requesting that the Fellowship make an independent enquiry into the circumstances surrounding her arbitrary dismissal from the Moray Steiner School. She included comprehensive documentation for all the events

which related to her dismissal.

The enquiry was later carried out by Shirley Noakes, a representative of the Fellowship, and in a letter following a meeting of the Schools Fellowship Council, the results of that enquiry were communicated to Jill Rathbone by Christopher Clouder himself, who wrote:

"Thank you for sending all of the information regarding your relationship with the Moray School. I believe Shirley Noakes has passed to you the substance of our discussion at the Steiner Schools Fellowship Council meeting where the report we received from the school tallied with your papers. . . .

"The School expressed sincere regret for what has happened and the Fellowship, although it has no jurisdiction over the school in question, also regrets that the affair happened under the banner of Steiner education where an attempt should always be made to consider the individual and their needs, whether they be a pupil or member of staff. . . ."274

The enquiry of the Steiner Schools Fellowship completely vindicated Jill Rathbone, yet she still remained the target of false discrimination from both the Moray Steiner School and the Findhorn Foundation. To make matters worse for her, another "independent" charity now demonstrated further proof of inappropriate discrimination.

Minton Trust is located at Minton House on the shoreline of Findhorn Bay, and is an independent Charity described as being "close to the Findhorn Foundation, an established spiritual and educational community with which we have strong links."²⁷⁵ In a letter which had earlier appeared in *Rainbow Bridge*, it had been stated by Judith Meynell that: "many of our guests originally come to Minton through the Foundation workshops, which I thank you for. I am hoping that Minton will continue to provide something in return. Despite the recession we have had a very good year with bookings, and I know that a number of our guests have subsequently gone on to attend Foundation events. There are

of course the Sunday Taizé services [to which] so many of you come."²⁷⁶

The purpose of the Minton Trust, as described in a promotional brochure, "is to seek through direct experience a deepening of spiritual awareness and understanding within and between all faiths, and to encourage a renewal of Christian worship."²⁷⁷ Among the Board of Advisors to the Trust, are the Rt. Rev. Michael Hare-Duke, Episcopal Bishop of St. Andrews; Reverend Bill Reid, a Church of Scotland minister in Paris; Eileen Caddy, co-founder of the Findhorn Foundation; Nigel Hamilton, the leader of the London Sufi Centre; and David Spangler of the Lorian Association, U.S.A.

Feeling very lonely, and totally excluded from any contact with the "spiritual community" she had come to Forres to join, Jill Rathbone appealed to the Christian charity of Judith Meynell, who both owned Minton House and was the Director of the Trust. She enquired:

"I understand that the Taizé meetings held at Minton House are open to everyone but, in view of my relationship with the Findhorn Foundation, I am writing to ask if your functions and courses are also open to me."²⁷⁸

For some reason Judith Meynell felt unable to make a Christian response, and did not reply.

In a letter to Margaret Ewing MP, Jill Rathbone recounted, "As I received no response from Judith Meynell at Minton House I telephoned her and was told by her that she was too busy to talk to me and would telephone back. When I telephoned her again later in the day she said that she had decided to write to me, and quoted from the letter saying that no courses are open to me while the situation with the Steiner School is unresolved. Judith was involved in the setting up of the Steiner School but could not tell me what I was supposed to have done wrong and said she did not want to be involved.

"I did not receive the letter, so telephoned again to be told that the letter had been torn up and thrown away. Judith said that she did not wish to send me a copy as she didn't

want it appearing in the press. She said that the content of her letter was not a legal issue and I asked, if that being the case, why she would not send it to me. Judith replied that she knows what I am like and didn't trust me. I asked how she knew what I am like, to which she replied that she had been told by people she did trust. I pointed out that nobody here knows me and Judith said that she did not want to be drawn into this sort of conversation."²⁷⁹

(During an interview with Jill Rathbone, she told me: "Elizabeth Taylor [a journalist with the *Forres Gazette*] was in possession of the information concerning me which related to the Findhorn Foundation, i.e., that I had been banned from the LCG programme by Loren Stewart. I did not know when or if an article was to appear in the *Gazette* and in fact the mention of the Moray Steiner School was not uncomplimentary, indeed it showed the School to be independent and charitable. It is *they* who, by their actions following the article, conclusively proved that the situation deserves another description [i.e., they are neither independent nor charitable]. In fact the information concerning me in the article was out-of-date, as I had been banned from all Foundation programmes on the 7th October. The article was not about the Steiner School but only mentioned that I had been employed by them").

The response of the Findhorn Foundation to the *Scottish Daily Express* investigation "*Probe the 'Mafia' cult*" which appeared on January 19th, was to lodge an objection with the Press Complaints Commission. But when Jill Rathbone later made an enquiry of Tony Austin of the Press Complaints Commission, he informed her by letter that "the Commission no longer has this matter under consideration as the Findhorn Trust have advised us they no longer wish to pursue their complaint," and that "Ms. Eve Ward, Director of Communications [at the Foundation], will, I am sure, explain their reasons if you get in touch with her."²⁸⁰

"As suggested," wrote Jill Rathbone to local MP Margaret Ewing, "I telephoned Eve Ward (also on the committee of

the Moray Steiner School) and asked her if she would give me the reasons for the withdrawal of the complaint against the *Daily Express*. All she would say was that to pursue it was not constructive (i.e., they had no case), that the best the Foundation could hope for would be a small apology from the *Express* in a corner of the paper, and the worst she did not like to speculate upon. As stated in my letter to you of 5th April, the Findhorn Foundation had offered to withdraw their complaint on the condition that the *Express* print an article formulated by the Foundation in its entirety and without edit. Naturally, this was refused by the *Express*. Previous to this the Foundation had offered to withdraw the complaint if the *Express* promised never to print another word about them again.

"I was told by Eve Ward that the parents of the children at the Moray Steiner School had been fully informed of the situation regarding myself, which is contrary to the information given to me by one parent. This parent told me that she was not familiar with the situation and was interested to hear my story.

"Eve Ward told me that I 'have to learn trust,' she was putting her 'fear' in talking to me in trust and I was told to 'know' that people love and care for me. I pointed out that there was no loving, caring attitude towards me, no-one from the school had either telephoned or enquired if I was coping, Foundation people avoided me in the street, and there is clearly a discrepancy between theory and practice. She swept aside the fact that I had been close to a breakdown and had had to seek medical help. The hypocrisy I encountered was beyond belief."²⁸¹

With the very limited demand for learning support teachers in the small Scottish town of Forres, Jill Rathbone decided to open a modest craft and rug shop in order to remain in the area she loved, and more pragmatically, to make a living. "On the morning of April 6th," she recounts, "John McLaughlin, an American resident at Cluny Hill College came into my shop, and during the course of a friendly conver-

sation about my stock, enquired if I was connected with the Findhorn Foundation. He told me he had been offered the position of Director of Education with the Findhorn Foundation, that he was an architectural historian and had lectured at Harvard University, U.S.A. He also informed me that he was a Rajneeshi [a follower of the disgraced controversial 'sex guru,' Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh,²⁸² now deceased]. He listened intently to the whole of the account of my lost employment and the complete ban on myself—callously imposed by Judy Buhler-McAllister—with regard to all Foundation public courses and programmes, including the Open Community membership programme. He then stated that the Open Community is a separate issue and not governed by the Findhorn Foundation, and was nothing to do with Judy Buhler-McAllister, and that if I wanted to join, it was not up to Judy to interfere. He assured me that he would look into the matter.

"When I later telephoned him on a business matter (he had enquired about a rug), I noted that his attitude towards myself had changed. It was clear that he now wished to distance himself from me.

"As a compromise, no doubt intended to ease his conscience, on the 13th April John McLaughlin brought me a copy of an article which had appeared in *Rainbow Bridge* detailing forthcoming events for Open Community members. Regarding membership he advised me to get in touch with a woman in the Foundation named Kay Kay. I again explained that I am banned from all programmes, but he told me that Open Community membership is not a programme and is open to anyone.

"I asked John if he could get me a copy of *Rainbow Bridge*. I had been told of an article which had been printed, written by another visiting American and Fellow of the Foundation who said that if the Foundation continues on their present course, this would result in court action against them not only from the British courts but also from the American courts. Unfortunately my informant (a resident at The Park)

was bound by secrecy not to say more or to let me have a copy of the article. Apparently all members now have to promise not to reveal the substance of Community meetings to 'outsiders.' A symptom of cult behaviour, surely? John said that he was too busy, but suggested I could subscribe to the newsletter myself. I pointed out again that I am not a Member and he replied that anyone could subscribe.

"I asked if he would try to find out why I had been banned. He replied that he didn't want to be involved. A very different attitude from our first conversation when he was so helpful and concerned.

"I telephoned Carol Alexander [not the writer of the anonymous letter previously mentioned, who has the same name], the editor of *Rainbow Bridge*, to enquire about subscribing to it. I was told that apart from Members, it is only available to those registered as Open Community members, or people with the 'special permission' of Jill Brierley.

"On telephoning Jill Brierley, she informed me that she couldn't give authority for my subscription due to 'the situation being in the higher realms of authority,' i.e., Judy Buhler-McAllister. She did not want to discuss the matter. I asked her about Open Community membership and she described it in newly formulated politically correct terms as 'a formal official part-programme within legal remit.'

"Katarina Brocke is Park Focaliser at the Foundation, so I telephoned her. I enquired about Open Community membership and if she would help me, but all she would say was that it is not her area, she 'takes care of members.' I queried this but all I could ascertain was that she is in charge of work areas. I asked if she would make an investigation for me but was told that each person has their own area and to contact Elizabeth Tønsberg.

"On the 14th April I managed to speak to Elizabeth Tønsberg (Open Community Membership). I had previously spoken to her on the 3rd January when she telephoned to tell me that, after discussion with Judy Buhler-McAllister

and Loren Stewart, my request for Open Community membership had been declined. I explained that the Steiner Fellowship had written to say that my report had tallied with that of their enquiry and that the Moray Steiner School had openly 'acknowledged it had been remiss,' that the Findhorn Foundation had withdrawn their complaint against the *Daily Express*, and I would now like to know what the position is regarding Open Community membership.

"Elizabeth said that there was something about me that makes people go 'blank' (yes, the fact that I ask questions), and that my rejection from Open Community membership HAD THE BACKING OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. I again explained that this could not be true as I know very few people in the Community. I had never even been given an interview, which is the normal procedure for application. Elizabeth Tønsberg then modified her statement and said that Judy Buhler-McAllister had the agreement of a number of people. I asked who they were, but she refused to give me names. She could not tell me what I had done wrong though she said that if I wrote to her she would pass it to Judy Buhler-McAllister. I said that this would be a pointless exercise. Elizabeth, however, was not prepared to take any action on her own.

"I later informed John McLaughlin of the responses regarding my enquiries on Open Community membership and that all roads led to Judy Buhler-McAllister (who he had originally said had no jurisdiction over Open Community membership). He replied that this was 'not how the Open Community sees itself but I guess that's where you are,' implying that it is my problem."²⁸³ So much for the prospective Director of Education, who was ethically illiterate.

The Moray Steiner School made an offer of a settlement prior to a scheduled Options Hearing for 24th May 1995. An offer had in fact previously been made by the School in January, but was cancelled out due to the School not registering a defence. In response, Jill Rathbone's solicitor wrote the following letter to the School's solicitors:

"Our client is prepared to accept the proposed figure of compensation, plus a contribution towards expenses, but on the condition that your clients are prepared to confirm and acknowledge, in writing, the content of the report made by Mrs. Shirley Noakes for Mr. Christopher Clouder, Chairman of the Steiner Schools Fellowship.

"Mrs. Rathbone received a letter from the Fellowship dated 21st February. You will note that your clients have accepted that they did not act entirely properly and that there is an expression of regret about the events. The School has confirmed to the Fellowship that the version of events as stated by our client is correct and there is a hint of the involvement of other parties in the reaching of the School's decision to act in the way that it did towards our client. . . .

"Our client advises that the information supplied by your clients to the Fellowship was as a result of an official enquiry, but the information and acceptance of fault does not appear to have been circulated among staff members at the School and the resultant feeling of hostility towards our client and the misunderstandings have caused our client distress and have affected her health.

"Are your clients willing to make any explanation or comments in writing as regards their treatment of Mrs. Rathbone?"²⁸⁴

The Moray Steiner School Council were not prepared to explain their treatment of Jill Rathbone. They would not admit the involvement of the Findhorn Foundation, and nor would they acknowledge the results of the enquiry by the Steiner Schools Fellowship. Due to increasing ill-health created through the stress engendered by her total rejection as a human being by three "spiritual" charities, Jill Rathbone accepted an improved offer of compensation by the School. At the Options Hearing the Sheriff awarded her full costs along with the compensation, which was understood to total at least £4-5,000. The Moray Steiner School afterwards contested the costs, but the award was upheld by the Sheriff, who further responded by charging a fee for his time.

In July 1995 the *Forres Gazette* reported that "An out-of-court settlement has been reached in a dispute between a special needs teacher living in Forres and the Moray Steiner School."²⁸⁵ According to the *Gazette*, Jill Rathbone "was relieved that the case, which has dragged on for several months, was closed. She said she felt vindicated, but remained unsatisfied by the explanations received."

The article also informed readers that "Mrs. Rathbone, excluded from Foundation courses and membership has since also found herself excluded from Minton House workshops."

Despite the settlement in her favour, Jill Rathbone remained totally debarred from the "spiritual community" she had so much wished to join. None of the three "independent" Charities in question, the Moray Steiner School, the Findhorn Foundation, or the Minton Trust, made any move towards reconciliation. Yet, in flat contradiction to the hypocrisy evidenced by these charities, each of them still professes to embody spiritual principles.

The intervention of MP Margaret Ewing failed to rouse the Scottish Charities Office (SCO), who would not act on behalf of those individuals who had been discriminated against by the Foundation for supporting Kate Thomas in her request for the right to an impartial hearing. The reason stated by the SCO was that the complaints were considered to be a private and legal matter between the individuals concerned and the Findhorn Foundation, and were not "an issue of wider public concern." Also, continued the letter from the Lord Advocate's Chambers, the "charity is a trust which runs courses and provides accommodation and there is no provision in its constitution for membership," ignoring the fact that the term "membership" was fully operative in the Foundation's literature and official documents during the time Kate Thomas became an Open Community member, and for which membership she contributed a requested donation.

When news of the SCO's decision reached Kate Thomas, she made the following public statement in the *Forres Gazette*:

"With regard to the past quite extensive coverage of the facts surrounding my expulsion from membership of the Open Community of the Findhorn Foundation, and the related and more sinister banning from membership and from all programmes open to the general public of anyone who knows me and supports the view that I am entitled to a hearing, I would like to inform your readers of the outcome of the situation.

"The Scottish Charities Office has agreed that what has been done to those concerned is clearly wrong, but it seems that the law relating to charities makes no provision for such discriminative and non-humanitarian procedures, nor does it differentiate between charities concerned solely with fund-raising for needy causes and those classifying themselves as 'spiritual' and educational.

"Therefore, despite the sympathetic assistance of an able local solicitor, and the intervention of an MP and several others, the Findhorn Foundation has not been obliged to confront what I believe to be its uncharitable and wholly undemocratic actions.

"The fact that three senior representatives of the Foundation who were personally responsible for the banning of five people do not have to answer for the distress caused in the lives of Gemma Whibley and Jill Rathbone, for instance, does not alter the callousness, arrogance and contempt with which they dealt with these women, doubtless in the unassailable knowledge that under the terms of their trust deed (worded with quite other intentions in mind), they were effectively out of reach of the law.

"This makes a mockery of the Foundation's well advertised stance on human rights and of peacemaking activities they purport to represent.

"In view of their newly founded Findhorn College of International Education, one can only hope that the absence of any impartial academic analysis in this organisation will soon come to light and be proven beyond dispute."²⁸⁶

9. "No more contact please"

The phrase "Findhorn Community" is currently one of the operative slogans within the Findhorn Foundation, having been recently promoted by the Findhorn College of International Education, a new venture. The "Findhorn Community" is defined by the officials concerned as encompassing the Foundation, Minton House, Newbold House, the Moray Steiner School, and the Findhorn College. The village name is thus extended to a proliferating number of New Age projects and businesses. The claims of the new Findhorn College require some attention here, as the Community is represented in glowing terms to all prospective visitors and donors via the promotional literature of the College.

When the present author personally requested a copy of the current course catalogue for the Findhorn College of International Education (here abbreviated as FCIE), I received an accompanying letter from the Chairman of the College, Roger Doudna, Ph.D., who was clearly anxious to inform me that the FCIE was an "Open Community" [formerly known as Open Community membership] initiative and "not a Foundation Programme." However, I could not help but note the advertised fact that "Findhorn College's programs blend traditional academic courses with exploration of the holistic worldview of the Findhorn Community in Scotland."²⁸⁷ Also, according to Doudna, "the Directors and Faculty of the College consist almost entirely of Community members who are either current or former 'leading lights' of the Foundation."²⁸⁸

Roger Doudna is an American who has been part of the

Findhorn Foundation Community since 1974. He gained a minor celebrity profile during the late 1980's after he had built the first eco-house made of recycled whisky-barrels within the Foundation (depicted on the front cover of this book). Because Doudna has a doctorate in philosophy, the Diogenesian associations between barrels and philosophy provided added media interest—yet according to the Stoic philosopher Seneca, Diogenes was said to be “so crabbed that he ought to have lived in a barrel, like a dog!”

Doudna has been involved with various entrepreneurial ventures during his time at the Foundation, the latest (apart from the FCIE) being Whole World Productions, which markets “Visionary Voices” on video. This is described as “an original series by Dr. Doudna of probing and ‘soul-full’ video interviews with some of the best teachers currently associated with the Findhorn Foundation.”²⁸⁹ The “visionary voices” include those of David Spangler, Peter Caddy, and Eileen Caddy.

In 1994, Roger Doudna, along with a woman named Mo Willett, “helped to create a group called Village Visionaries in Action [later known as Visionaries in Action], hoping to self-organise and empower those 200 or so non-Foundation members [Open Community and Associate members] who live in this area because of the vision and place that is the Foundation.”²⁹⁰ Both Doudna and Willett, in their former roles as co-focalisers of Open Community activities, were individually approached by Kate Thomas after she had been so arbitrarily expelled from Open Community membership by Judy Buhler-McAllister. Neither of the two founders of “Visionaries in Action” made any active move whatsoever to “empower” Thomas in her petition for a fair hearing, let it be duly noted. Mo Willett was sent a comprehensive file of documentation by Thomas pertaining to the events that led up to the latter’s expulsion. Her covering letter, dated 8th February 1994, read:

“Herewith enclosed some photocopies of letters relating to my expulsion. . . . You asked me, Mo, when we last spoke

together, why I wished to join a community which promotes so many things I cannot support. My reason for joining is presumably the same as your own, that I support *totally* the aims outlined in the Foundation's Trust Deed, and for the furtherance of these aims I came here to live. The Trust Deed does not mention unproven therapies, gender issues, Holotropic Breathwork, or money-making innovations like the Game of Transformation. I understood that the community was based on egalitarian principles and welcomed exponents of a variety of traditional spiritual disciplines.

"... I do not think my request for discussion [with the Foundation management] is unreasonable, nor my view that an opportunity for discussion should have been given me prior to expulsion. My enquiry re the possibility of discussion *after* the event certainly does not merit the attitude taken by Gordon Cutler, who put down the receiver on me when I telephoned him last Friday."

Willett immediately returned the unread file along with a curt, undated note which stated:

"Sorry, my life is concerned with learning from current reality, not lingering in the past, which I cannot change. No more contact please."

In the October 1993 issue of the independent Findhorn Community magazine, *The Golden Voice*, Mo Willett had somewhat hypocritically written:

"I feel strongly that this is now the path the Foundation has to tread—taking out into the Community more positively the experience of opening up the heart to love... (p. 23)."

The objective of the FCIE is to offer a "Global Village Programme" in environmental and community studies centred upon the Findhorn Community, a community described as "a leader in raising consciousness and creating new models for people to live and work together in deeply harmonious ways—a living experiment leading the way into the 21st century."²⁹¹ The programme is intended to be run in association with Universities that will accept the "Global Village Programme" of the Findhorn College as a legitimate academic

course for their students.

Dr. Doudna added a rather odd hand-written PS at the end of his letter to me, in which he stated that there was "no need to blast" the FCIE, because the "Foundation itself [are] already on that course." He evidently thinks that his new project is beyond criticism. It definitely is not. Prior to receiving his letter, I had heard on the local grapevine that there was dissension within the Findhorn Community regarding the introduction of the "academic" programme, serious academic endeavours being of course antithetical to what the Findhorn Foundation has actually commercially promoted for the past 30 years. Also, questions had been raised by a few of the more literate within the community concerning the academic credibility of the members of the Faculty for the FCIE. But like so many areas of discord within this organisation, such realism was not conveyed to the general public. In an article in *One Earth* magazine, Dr. Doudna gave a completely erroneous impression regarding the "consensus" support for the FCIE proposal. He wrote: "Despite a number of doubts and concerns, the Community rose to the occasion and added its broad consent in a fashion reminiscent of great moments from the past . . . Hence, we are working towards the launch of this programme in the 1995-1996 academic year."²⁹²

Yet in the Autumn 1995 issue of *One Earth*, Dr. Doudna had to publicly concede: "I can recall no comparable controversy in my entire 20 years here. It [the FCIE proposal] has called into question our core identity and purpose, our leadership, our newly clarified procedures for decision-making, our ways of dealing with conflict, the very fabric and viability of the community itself, bringing up a complex web of lurking issues for consideration and integration."²⁹³

Dr. Doudna believes that "Findhorn College's mission is to provide a link between the Findhorn Community and the academic world. . ."²⁹⁴ However, the commercial nature of the project, plus the obvious factor of anti-academic Foundation influences, might indicate otherwise.

Craig Gibsone and Mary Inglis are also Directors of this enterprise, which can boast a separate Charity Number; like Doudna, they are major Foundation representatives, Inglis being one of the Foundation Trustees and a resident member (if one is allowed to use, even as a figure of speech, the politically deleted word "member"). Although the FCIE is a separately registered charity, the address is that of The Park, Findhorn—the major Foundation venue, and proof enough of the nature of the enterprise. Programme fees are stated to include tuition, administrative fees, housing, and meals.²⁹⁵ "Tuition, room, board and fees for the 1995/1996 program are £5,700 per semester (\$9,500 at the time of going to press)."²⁹⁶

There is something very doubtful about the presumed status of an institution like the FCIE, which glorifies the Findhorn Community (i.e., the Foundation, Minton House, Newbold House, the Moray Steiner School, and the FCIE) in terms of: "Acting on the premise that all life is interconnected, the Findhorn Community has evolved into a planetary village."²⁹⁷ The planetary concept does not include those who are dissenters from, or victims of, the repressive Community.

A letter to prospective students from the Directors of the FCIE states that: "From its grassroots beginnings to its present world renown, the Findhorn Community in Scotland has striven to practice what it preaches, to put theory to the test, to live together in a way that models sensitivity for the environment, that views caring for the earth, its plants, animals and humans as something to engage in on a daily basis."²⁹⁸ More realistically, what that censorious Community has demonstrated is a very pronounced tendency to dismiss legitimate local criticism as negative and to instigate repressive measures against dissidents and their conscientious supporters—even to the extent of seeking to place a legal interdict upon valid observations of what occurs on a daily basis beneath the veneer of unconditional love. The so-called planetary village has commercially created an

internal power structure of officials who too frequently extend insensitivity to anyone who disagrees with them.

By academic standards, the credentials of the thirteen Faculty members are not impressive—there is, for instance, only one Ph.D. among them, and it is doubtful if any of the advertised Faculty have had any serious long-term academic teaching experience. One of the Faculty, former Foundation Director Craig Gibsone, has no academic qualifications listed at all, and is on record elsewhere as stating that “much of my life has been spent overcoming addiction—especially to alcohol,” although a three-year “experience with psychedelic drugs” was also admitted.²⁹⁹

Another Faculty member, Ulla Sebastian, M.A., a former clinical psychologist who established a financially productive bed and breakfast venture within the Foundation, had previously advertised her Neo-Reichian workshops in *Rainbow Bridge* (see for example, 3rd April, 1990), stating that, “In my work as a therapist . . . I focussed on the body structures which prevent sexual pleasure and fulfilment and distort the understanding of love.” She continues, “On a practical level, I investigated the collective dimension in a German community whose main concern was to free the sexual energy from its cultural distortions in order to reach spiritual enlightenment.” She did not stipulate whether or not such enlightenment was ever achieved. Perhaps the German counterculture communes in question were also advocates of the theories of Wilhelm Reich, who had encouraged sexual freedom of expression which included masturbation for children, acceptance of group nudity, and recreational sex. According to a description of the sexual activities of a Neo-Reichian commune in Austria: “Couples who enter the commune are urged to begin sexual liaisons with others, but prolonged sexual pairing-off is discouraged. Each adult woman in the group is given a double bed, and in the afternoon, or a day earlier, an interested man may approach her, suggesting they sleep together.”³⁰⁰ All very enlightening, no doubt, by the standards of the New Age.

Therapy figures prominently amongst the Faculty of the FCIE. One of the psychotherapists listed is Ben Fuchs, an American M.A. whose "professional interests include techniques of empowerment of both individuals and groups."³⁰¹ Such fashionable therapeutic "empowerment" arguably contributes to the dictatorial regime of the Findhorn Foundation, accentuating tendencies to self-assertion instead of conscience. Fuchs is advertised as having trained with Arnold Mindell in matters such as "conflict resolution." The Findhorn Community do not resolve conflicts, but instead pretend that these do not exist and also create conflicts by a hideous treatment of stigmatised parties.³⁰²

Ben Fuchs has also been associated with another New Age "Findhorn Community" venture, namely Newbold House in Forres, where he has facilitated therapy workshops "utilising tools from humanistic psychology, such as Bioenergetics and Gestalt." This charity-status establishment, acquired in 1979, is described in a promotional brochure as "an elegant mansion, built in 1893 and set in seven acres of woodland." It is the home of an international residential community. Up until the time of the intervention of the Scottish Charities Office, Newbold House had been involved in promoting Holotropic Breathwork™ alongside the Foundation, and even the focaliser in charge of Newbold, Ulrike Thiel, was herself a Breathwork facilitator trainee.

In one of the public courses offered in the *Newbold House Brochure and Programmes, February – December 1993*, it was stated: "We combine the meditation practice of 'just sitting,' T'ai Chi Chuan, and the American Indian sweatlodge in a training which helps us in our lives in a responsible and victorious way." (Nude sweatlodge ceremonies had gained an extremist reputation at Newbold when they were combined with meditation sessions). Yet meditation, T'ai Chi, and sweatlodge ceremonies do nothing to prevent irresponsible living in those who have not developed a due sense of morality. Whilst on a coach journey to Elgin, the present author along with all other passengers in ear-shot, was

jovially informed by the late Tom Buchan—a very articulate local Scot who was a writer and a Findhorn Community member for many years, and who was in the process of completing a critical book relating to the Foundation before his untimely death (October 1995)—that a long-term residential staff member of Newbold House had recently been “carpeted” for excessive promiscuity, and had been asked to leave the Centre as a result of complaints made by young women staying there. Buchan alleged that he had been told this earlier that same day by a Foundation Trustee, no less, who was apparently as pleased as Buchan that this problem was at last being dealt with. Perhaps the individual in question, who was known to have a partiality for American Indian sweatlodge ceremonies, was attempting to emulate Sun Bear (now deceased), a very controversial American Indian who claimed to be a “medicine man” and who, in 1970, founded the New Age oriented Bear Tribe Medicine Society. According to Judith Boice, who visited the Bear Tribe: “Most women who come to the tribe are both flattered and embarrassed by the attention [from Sun Bear], flustered by [his] sexual advances when they expected a ‘spiritual’ man. . . . The members of the Bear Tribe have confronted him a few times about his sexual advances and declared that they would warn incoming females about his licentious behaviour.” See J. Boice, *At One With All Life: A Personal Journey in Gaian Communities* (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1990), p. 21. Sun Bear was not viewed with approval by many other American Indians (see K. Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. One*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 828, 830–1).

The above information on the Newbold staff member was further enlarged upon to Kate Thomas by Tom Buchan, who occasionally stopped her in the Forres High Street to impart friendly information on various “Findhorn Community” matters about which he felt strongly. On the strength of this, Thomas wrote to Cally Miller-Simpson, one of the founders and a Trustee of the Newbold charity, as she found it difficult to believe the allegations, the member in question

having recently gravitated into the Findhorn Foundation where he was now advertised in the Foundation's guest brochure offering a course for the general public. Ignoring the reference to the Foundation Trustee informant, Miller-Simpson's rather ambiguous reply to the query made by Thomas, dated 6th March 1995, dismissed the matter with the justification:

"At our Trustee meetings we have an observer from the Findhorn Foundation, so there was 'no cover-up' in our handling of [the named member's] leaving."

Over the past decade, pathetic caricatures of the Native American Tradition and other forms of Shamanism have achieved increasing commercial exploitation within the New Age movement, including Centres such as the Findhorn Foundation. An example of commercial New Age "Neo-Shamanism" was advertised in the *Findhorn Foundation Guest Brochure - Summer 1995*, under the title: "The Gentle Warrior." This one week course, for which an individual contribution of between £300-£400 was stipulated, was co-focalised by Loren Stewart, and described in terms of: "The 'Gentle Warrior' represents our commitment to realise and apply our potential as inspired beings to our daily lives. We can learn to stand for the power of gentleness, kindness, compassion, and love." The documentation incorporated in the present work tends very much to prove otherwise. A self-styled "Gentle Warrior," Loren Stewart has proved himself the reverse of gentle, kind, and compassionate, and has certainly shown no love to Kate Thomas, Gemma Whibley, Jill Rathbone, and other recipients of prohibitions. The hypocrisy evidenced is further consolidated when one discovers that Stewart was also advertised in the same abovementioned guest brochure as co-focaliser for a two week course entitled "Women and Men: Essential Peacemaking," the declared "aim" of which is "to explore our differences and similarities, our gifts and wisdom, gaining a new respect for ourselves and each other." The advertised cost of the course was £590-£690.

Critics are surely justified when they conclude that commercial therapies sold within the Findhorn Foundation such as Mindell's Process-Oriented Psychology, Grof's Holotropic Breathwork™, Essential Peacemaking, and so-called Shamanism, are ineffective in real life. The social behaviour exhibited within the Foundation totally disproves the value of the therapies promoted by that organisation and other branches of the "Findhorn Community."

Postscript

In April 1996 it was reported by the press that: "The Findhorn College of International Education which was set up . . . to offer facilities to university students studying environmental and global matters has collapsed. . . . A spokesperson at the Findhorn Foundation confirmed that the college was no longer in operation after its initial batch of seven US university students had 'mutinied' over dissatisfaction with the course." ("Student 'mutiny' closes college," *Forres Gazette*, 10th April 1996, p. 1).

10. "Royal refusal for ecology conference"

Following the publication of *The Destiny Challenge*, a copy was purchased by Peter Caddy, the co-founder of the Findhorn Foundation, who had, it seems, become somewhat disillusioned with the community he helped to create. In a letter sent to Kate Thomas from his home in Germany, he stated: "Many of your expressed concerns about the so-called New Age movement and particularly the Foundation, will, I trust, receive the attention they deserve."³⁰³

On February 18th, 1994, shortly before his 77th birthday, Peter Caddy was killed in a motor accident near his home at Lake Constance in Southern Germany. In an obituary published in *The Scotsman*, Angus Marland wrote: "In years to come, Scots will look back with pride to the time when a practical visionary established his Foundation in Scotland and opened its door to guests from far and wide."³⁰⁴ That "door," nevertheless, still remains firmly shut to local resident Kate Thomas, plus her friends and supporters.

Four months following the death of their co-founder, the Findhorn Foundation used what was described as the "emotive publicity" surrounding his death in an attempt to raise funds, despite, as one critic observed, their "assets running into millions of pounds."³⁰⁵ It was reported by the *Forres Gazette* that:

"A major fundraising call has been made by the Findhorn Foundation following the death of co-founder Mr. Peter Caddy.

"Foundation Director Ms. Judy Buhler-McAllister has made an appeal for a 'renewed call to action.' The mailing is being sent out first class to 11,000 regular customers of the

Foundation courses in the UK, Europe and the US.

"Her call is backed by a letter from Mr. Caddy's former wife, Eileen, now in her seventies and still living at the Foundation, in which she urges supporters to start thinking in millions of pounds.

"A copy of an obituary of Mr. Caddy is also enclosed, along with a donation form."³⁰⁶

In a "personalised" letter from Eileen Caddy addressed to "My dear Family," she outlined her "think rich, grow rich" outlook, expressed in terms of: "When all of us can think in millions of pounds, we will draw millions of pounds to us." This glib sanction for greed expressed a memorable misapplication of the theme of expanding consciousness.

"Could we start right now expanding our consciousness to help bring this about?" asked Eileen Caddy. "Let us dig a deep hole and put that consciousness of lack and limitation into it and cover it up and banish it forever, and fill our consciousness with Abundance, with Plenty. I believe the word Findhorn means the 'Horn of Plenty.' It is all there, let us draw it to us."

The "us" referred to, meaning those who would benefit from the "millions," must surely have meant the Findhorn Foundation, as the recipients of Eileen Caddy's epistle were the persons expected to donate the stipulated millions of pounds to the already affluent Charity.

As to Eileen Caddy's reference to Findhorn meaning the "Horn of Plenty," according to one informed Findhorn villager, R. Lyell Munro: "It is generally accepted that 'Findhorn' is an ancient Gaelic name—like so many in Moray—and that it is a corruption of 'Fionn erne.' 'Fionn' means 'white' in English and 'erne' means 'water' or 'river.'"³⁰⁷

It was later publicised by Roger Doudna in *One Earth* magazine that "the Foundation management team spear-headed by Patrick Nash announced they were tired of 'zero sum budgets.'" Mr. Nash "announced that it was time to 'go for gold' in the form of creating some noticeable profits. The suggested strategy to achieve this was to be two-fold: a more

professional fund-raising effort and increased guest numbers."³⁰⁸ To achieve some "noticeable profits" the Findhorn Foundation created "a new Stewardship Fund" to receive donations and grants. "Significantly," continued Doudna, "we have received to date some £32,000 from the first two of three planned fund-raising mailings this year (1994), in addition to some £20,000 in donations and bequests."³⁰⁹ Those who contributed were merely a set of financial figures in the Foundation's quest for "gold."

"Since its founding in 1962, the Findhorn Foundation has been internationally known for its experimentation with new models for holistic and sustainable living," declared a 1995 brochure for a Foundation Conference entitled *Eco-Villages & Sustainable Communities: Models for 21st Century Living*. "Eco-Villages" were said to "represent 'human ecologies' that are sustainable: spiritually, culturally, economically and ecologically." The Findhorn Community viewed themselves as "part of a small but rapidly developing network of ecological village projects worldwide."³¹⁰

"Eco-village" and "sustainable living" are certainly the new commercial buzzwords heard within the Findhorn Community today, and the Foundation have recently publicised their "active commitment to the use of renewable energy systems, recycling, ecological waste treatment and environmental education."³¹¹ The "active commitment" in the past had previously been largely commercial propaganda and utopian idealism—the Foundation had in fact been talking of a "planetary village" since 1979—and only during the past five years have sixteen ecological buildings been built, a number of solar panels installed, and a wind generator for electricity brought into operation, producing 15% of the total electricity needs of the community. Regarding the purchase of the wind generator, Sir Michael Joughin, former chairman of the Hydro-Electric Board, pointed out, "the 106,000 kilowatts cited in the Foundation's annual review for the windmill was not very economic. That's only worth up to £8,000 a year on an original investment of more than £70,000, he said."³¹²

The highly profiled and heavily sponsored development programme for the "ecologically sound buildings" currently under construction within the Foundation is definitely not part of a planned charitable social agenda to help those in need. The beneficiaries are affluent members of the Findhorn Community—those who can afford to purchase the properties or who acquire them through staff positions (these properties were originally intended as replacement residential accommodation for members living in caravans).

The currently stated "active commitment" on the part of the Foundation is therefore largely insular and sectarian, and increasingly becoming centred on a privileged "middle-class." A far cry indeed from the egalitarian utopian commune era of the seventies. The Foundation is now on record as stating that it does not have a social role "to feed those in need, heal the sick and house the poor," and nor to attempt to help "resolve society's existing tensions."³¹³ The social policies of the Foundation do not actually extend beyond its own commercial and narcissistic needs.

One Foundation observer, community member Patsy Blackstock, has raised the question: "Is the Findhorn Foundation Community becoming a convenience based middle-class community of people who can afford cars and modern housing and whose lives are dedicated to planetary changes as long as we can have our cars and drive them, too?"³¹⁴ Blackstock quoted a survey which revealed that in one area of the Foundation, 74 adult residents (plus 15 children) in 51 residential caravans and houses "have 32 cars among them." That, she says, is "a ratio of 1 car to 2.3 people, in a community that calls itself a model for sustainability." We are informed that: "In Britain, the ratio of cars to people is 1 to 3."³¹⁵

Commenting upon the Foundation's Eco-village development plans, Patsy Blackstock feared that "New houses [are] likely to mean 'more.' More televisions. More washing machines. More cars."³¹⁶

Elsewhere, Kevin Shepherd, another discerning observer

of the New Age counterculture, has commented in more general terms: "... a major discrepancy is that many of those nominally partisan to new age thought are in fact examples of almost complete dependence upon current technological assets."³¹⁷ He was primarily referring to the affluent middle class audience who provide the fee-paying clientele for the commercial New Age. Shepherd has opened up a major issue with his reflection: "While visitors to 'New Age' centres like the Findhorn Foundation desire 'techniques' as promoted by vulgar ESP writers and therapists, disdaining greater literacy in alternative thought, one cannot be over-optimistic of Western standards of progress outside the industrial network of poisons. Indeed, this psychological situation of regress is a suitable accompaniment to the ecological debacle, but one that is actually far more polluting in areas of mind commonly neglected."³¹⁸ In other words, the major pollutants are worse than ecological deficits. What sort of psychological sewage is involved in the "think rich, grow rich" attitude of the Foundation's "horn of plenty"?

In July 1995, it was reported that "members of the Foundation celebrated the award of an £80,000 grant, half the cost of building a ground-breaking eco-friendly sewage treatment plant."³¹⁹ The grant came via the Inverness-based Highlands and Islands Partnership under European Community Objective funding. However, it was questioned "whether the 'mystical and spiritual' community is the appropriate group to handle £80,000 of European research cash for a pioneering sewage-processing plant." Sir Michael Joughin commented: "A community whose objectives are mystical and spiritual and whose staff members do not have the experience or qualifications for scientific research seems an odd destination for public funds." It was observed that colleges of agriculture, which already had a long history of research into similar treatment, discovered that the process "had not proved economical"³²⁰

In a letter to the editor of the *Forres Gazette*, Joughin appeared to voice the consensus feelings of those opposed

to the grant:

"In a free country, the Foundation must be allowed to build any sewerage plant they choose, provided it is approved by the water and planning authorities, and provided they use their own money.

"Their main policy objective at the moment is to demonstrate the 'Eco Village—a sustainable community.' Indeed, they have a conference on this subject in October at which they hope to demonstrate their 'basic principles' of sustainable community development which represent 'human ecologies' that are sustainable 'spiritually, culturally, economically and ecologically.'

"Make what you will of that politically correct jargon, but they can hardly be said to be 'sustainable' economically when they seek and accept £80,000 of sewage money. They could not build it without that help from us—the payers of taxes.

"Nor could they run other facets of their activities without the relief from UK taxes given by their charitable status . . ." ³²¹

Further evidence of the disparities involved in the Foundation's "sustainable community development" were contained in a public appeal for donations towards "building the new kitchen at The Park." The plea had come from Loren Stewart, who in a new role as "Park kitchen focaliser," was requesting a further £35,000 on top of the £15,000 in donations already received. Loren Stewart—a community member for twenty years who now lives in a large detached de-luxe Foundation eco-house and drives a car—informs us that he "left the Findhorn Foundation's Management Group to go back to work in the kitchen" where he "could work with consciousness to help raise the vibrations of this place [the kitchen], not from a position of authority, but from a position of 'love in action.'" Unfortunately, his newly proclaimed position of "love in action" sounds an acute contradiction in view of other events recorded in this book.

The Foundation, in a contrived attempt to improve their blemished media image, had included among the guest list

of invited speakers to their October 1995 ecology conference a senior member of the Royal Family known for his interest in the development of "urban villages." But it was later reported that "H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, who was listed among 'invited speakers' in printed promotional literature *before those involved had had time to reply*" in consent to this, had declined to attend (italics mine).³²² Although the Foundation knew well in advance that the Prince of Wales would not be present, subsequent promotional literature for the conference, which included the Findhorn College of International Education course catalog intended for circulation in the U.S.A., continued to advertise H.R.H. as among the invited speakers.³²³ Rather than remove his name, the reference to the Prince of Wales was qualified with the phrase: "subject to confirmation."

Jill Rathbone later sent documentation to St. James's Palace relating to the cult behaviour evidenced in her direction (see chapter 8) by Foundation staff members and the Moray Steiner School, referring also to the abovementioned misuse of the name of H.R.H. for advertising purposes. In reply, she was informed by Commander Richard Aylard, the Private Secretary to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales:

"His Royal Highness was interested to learn of your views on this subject and has taken careful notice of the points you make."³²⁴

Conclusion

I have attempted to ensure that this account is as accurate as possible, though I do concede that it is not the "value-free" research favoured by academic sociologists. A sense of due values are very much an issue in relation to any investigation of New Age trends. My personal encounters with the Foundation enabled me to perceive that the values to which they subscribe are too rarely put into action. I have therefore tended to accentuate the incongruities in evidence rather than emphasise whatever positive elements might exist in that organisation. Everyone knows that ecological and environmental concerns are important, but pursuit of such concerns does not justify shortcomings. Even the admirable initiative of Alan Watson (an FCIE Faculty member), who is currently working for the regeneration of the Caledonian Forest, does not mean that the Findhorn Foundation has succeeded in creating an ideal community, even if representatives describe their community as a "planetary village." The commercial trends, and the questionable staff policies, render a due sense of critique imperative, I do here maintain. For instance, Alan Watson is also a Foundation Trustee who has abetted certain repressive measures relating to humans.

The tendency of the Foundation to invest their activities with a global significance is unconvincing to many observers. Though it may be conceded that they have attempted an ecological programme, their so-called "educational activities" have for many years revolved around commercial courses in alternative therapy and the "workshop" concept, which leaves so many of the participants uneducated about the

spiritual dimensions of life, not to mention relevant secular knowledge. The "holistic worldview" of the Foundation does not integrate humans with each other, as is claimed, but affords an excuse for arbitrary policies extending to mismanagement and a medieval disposition to repression.

I was an Associate member of the Foundation during 1989–90, and was one of those who opposed the introduction of Holotropic Breathwork™. I experienced dismay at the way in which spiritual concerns were obscured by a preoccupation with alternative therapy. Though I am still in agreement with certain objectives expressed in the Foundation Trust Deed, the application of misguided methods to those objectives has resulted in a malfunctioning and hypocritical community. Both before and after the cessation of my membership, I found that the Foundation staff were incapable of serious dialogue with contrary viewpoints. They have resorted to repressive measures instead of any democratic form of solution. To them, criticism is "negative," implying that their policies are flawlessly positive. The facts indicate otherwise. In particular, the circumstances under which they deleted the term "membership" from their official vocabulary are sufficient to cast grave doubts upon the integrity of the psychology nurtured by alternative therapy.

There are a number of writings available that provide readers with an "official" and partisan view of the history, work, beliefs, and practices of the Findhorn Foundation. None of these have attempted to record the sociological deficiencies evidenced in the *behaviour* of the community. That behaviour has often been in contradiction to professed ideals and favoured jargon, and is one reason to regard the claims of alternative therapy with great caution and scepticism. Therefore, as an alternative to the partisan literature, I hope that this book will prove useful, and not least of all to the Findhorn Foundation itself.

To finish here, I offer the reader an observation by Kevin Shepherd as a point of reference, and one with which I am in total agreement:

"A sociological approach to the New Age is not obliged to believe or accept what the New Age exponents say. Very often, what they do does not tally with what they say, as amongst the staff at Findhorn. Critique must be firm, therefore, and undeterred by the accusation of being judgmental. If not, more mistakes and more crimes will be perpetrated rather than less mistakes and crimes."³²⁵

Notes

1. A. Rigby, *Alternative Realities: a study of communes and their members* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, and quoting from a personal communication received from one of the co-founders of the Findhorn Community.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
8. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community: Creating a Human Identity for the 21st Century* (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1990), p. 80.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–79.
11. David Spangler has stated, that after he arrived in 1970, "over a period of six months" a new wave of members "swelled the ranks of the community from 15 people to 45 people and then, six months later, to 150 people." Spangler returned to the United States in 1973. See D. Spangler and W. I. Thompson, *Reimagination of the World: A Critique of the New Age, Science, and Popular Culture* (Santa Fe: Bear & Company, 1991), p. 35.
12. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community*, p. 81.
13. The Findhorn Community, *Faces of Findhorn: Images of a Planetary Family* (Findhorn: Findhorn Publications, 1980), p. 30.
14. R. Akhurst, *My Life and the Findhorn Community* (Falmouth: Honey Press, 1992), p. 33.
15. Monica Sjöö, in her critique of the Foundation from a feminist perspective, has commented that Peter Caddy

- "was interested in Theosophy and believed himself to be directed by 'secret masters' to join together with Eileen to help develop her psychic gifts, and that she was his other spiritual half." See M. Sjöö, *New Age and Armageddon* (London: The Women's Press, 1992), p. 90.
16. R. Akhurst, *My Life and the Findhorn Community*, p. 41.
 17. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community*, p. 84.
 18. L. Stewart, "Complexity and Challenge," *One Earth*, Issue No.14, Summer 1994, p. 18. *One Earth* is the Findhorn Foundation community magazine, which has been circulating for many years. The method of numeration changed during 1990 when it became One Earth Ltd.
 19. See *Faces of Findhorn*, p. 29.
 20. E. Caddy, *Flight into Freedom* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1988), p. 75.
 21. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community*, p. 75.
 22. A. Forbes, "A New Age community facing the age-old problems of local tradition," *The Scotsman*, 17th November 1992.
 23. A. Forbes, "Call for charity inquiry on Findhorn group," *The Scotsman*, 16th November 1992.
 24. *One Earth*, Volume 8, Issue 2, Summer 1988, p. 41.
 25. A. Rigby, *Alternative Realities*, p. 153.
 26. *Ibid.*
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
 28. E. Taylor, "Foundation finances raise fears," *The Northern Scot*, 10th December 1993.
 29. A. Walker, "From Community to Village: An Economic Perspective," *One Earth*, Vol. 5, Issue 3, March/April 1985, p. 12.
 30. See E. Taylor, article cited, *The Northern Scot*, 10th December 1993. See also "Questionmarks over Foundation cash claims," *Forres Gazette*, 12th October 1994.
 31. Information obtained from the *Findhorn College of International Education 1995/1996 Course Catalog*, pp. 12, 14.
 32. "Plan for 30 homes angers villagers," *Forres Gazette*, 1st November 1995. The *Gazette* later reported that the controversial housing development scheme which had been favourably described by Foundation spokesman Glen Walters as "an ecological Milton Keynes," had caused

- concern and "anger" amongst Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council members. The chairman of the Council, Sir Michael Joughin, was reported to have said: "It would be difficult to imagine anything more inappropriate to the traditional village of Findhorn." See E. Morrison, "Watch-dogs throw down the gauntlet," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd November 1995.
33. Findhorn Foundation "Vision Statement" (1994).
 34. J. Buhler-McAllister, "Warts and all..." *Findhorn Foundation Guest Programme October 1995 - April 1996*, p. 3.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*, columns 2 and 3.
 37. J. Slocombe, "Commentary," *One Earth*, Issue No. 8, Winter 1992/93, p. 7.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. J. Booth, "Findhorn in 'Takeover Scare,'" *Forres Gazette*, 1st July 1992.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. J. Brierley, "The Planetary Village: A Personal Perspective," *One Earth*, Issue No. 1, Autumn 1990, p. 26.
 44. J. Booth, article cited, *Forres Gazette*, 1st July 1992.
 45. E. Taylor, "Foundation Finances Queried," *Forres Gazette*, 16th September 1992.
 46. *Ibid.*
 47. E. Taylor, "Foundation finances raise fears," *The Northern Scot*, 10th December 1993.
 48. Minton House: "Programme of Events" (1989).
 49. J. Booth, "Row Over Health Centre Plan," *Forres Gazette*, 24th June 1992.
 50. K. Lloyd, "A Vision of Holistic Health," *One Earth*, Issue No. 6, Spring 1992, p. 35.
 51. "Villagers accused of Foundation 'bashing'" *Forres Gazette*, 17th February 1993.
 52. Minton House: *The Spirit of Business*, Programme of Events, 1992/3.
 53. K. Lloyd, "A Vision of Holistic Health: Grounded and Growing," *One Earth*, Issue No. 6, Spring 1992, p. 35.
 54. *The Spirit of Business*, Minton House Programme.

55. "GP's cautious welcome for proposed centre," *Forres Gazette*, 24th June 1992.
56. *Ibid.*
57. See, for example, *Findhorn Bay Holistic Health Centre Programme*, 1992. This refers to the Meridian Centre.
58. B. J. Baginsli and S. Sharamon, *Reiki: Universal Life Energy* (Mendocino, CA: LifeRhythm, 1988).
59. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
62. C. Hill, "Reiki: A Rediscovery," *Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 1995, p. 39.
63. Baginsli and Sharamon, *Reiki: Universal Life Energy*, p. 47.
64. Advertisement: "Reiki: A Healing Circle," Shambhala Healing Centre, *Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 1995, p. 41.
65. Advertisement: "Masters in Paradise. Bali 12th–18th June 1995," *Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 1995, p. 41.
66. *Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 1995, p. 40.
67. C. Fellner, "Holistic Health Dept. News," *Rainbow Bridge*, 8th May 1991, p. 6.
68. R. White, *Working With Your Chakras* (London: Piatkus, 1993), p. 43.
69. K. Thomas, *The Destiny Challenge: A Record of Spiritual Experience and Observation* (Forres: New Frequency Press, 1992).
70. *Ibid.*, p. 987. See also "Book in 'sham' blast at Foundation," *Forres Gazette*, 15th July 1992.
71. K. Thomas, *The Destiny Challenge*, pp. 987–989.
72. J. Booth, "Takeover Scare is based on 'blethers,' says Foundation," *Forres Gazette*, 8th July 1992.
73. "Book in 'sham' blast at Foundation," *Forres Gazette*, 15th July 1992.
74. J. Booth, article cited, *Forres Gazette*, 8th July 1992.
75. "Book in 'sham' blast," *Forres Gazette*, 15th July 1992.
76. J. Booth, article cited, *Forres Gazette*, 8th July 1992.
77. See the letter of K. Thomas under the title "Author leaps to defence," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd July 1992.
78. K. Thomas, *The Destiny Challenge*, p. 989.
79. "Book escapes legal action – so far," *Forres Gazette*, 5th August 1992.

80. See the letter of Dr. S. J. Darke under the title "'Destiny' book on the shelves," *Forres Gazette*, 5th August 1992.
81. M. Sjöö, "Findhorn's Plan of Light" in *New Age and Armageddon* (London: The Women's Press, 1992), pp. 89ff.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 90. See also R. Storm, *In Search of Heaven on Earth* (London: Aquarian Press, 1992), p. 204, who notes that there have been complaints that the Findhorn Foundation "is becoming too worldly, that the sense of enlightenment has disappeared and that the accent is now on physical and entrepreneurial expansion rather than spiritual growth."
83. Sjöö, *op cit.*, p. 91.
84. Letter from D. Francis to K. Thomas, dated 20th November 1992.
85. J. Rowan, *The Transpersonal: Psychotherapy and Counselling* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 11-12.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
87. E. Caddy, *Flight into Freedom* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1988).
88. S. Grof, *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* (New York: SUNY, 1988), p. 207.
89. See K. Thomas, *Signals from Eternity: The Autobiography of a 20th Century Mystic* (Cambridge: Roseking Publications, 1984; repr. 1986); K. Thomas, *Beloved Executioner* (Cambridge: Roseking Publications, 1986); K. Thomas, *The Destiny Challenge: A Record of Spiritual Experience and Observation* (Forres: New Frequency Press, 1992).
90. See K. Shepherd, *Meher Baba, An Iranian Liberal* (Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1988), for an introduction to the subject which avoids the devotional stereotypes.
91. A. Forbes, "Call for charity inquiry on Findhorn group," *The Scotsman*, 16th November 1992.
92. E. Taylor, "Findhorn boils over Foundation title," *Forres Gazette*, May 1990.
93. "Foundation offers hand of friendship," *Forres Gazette*, 24th July 1992.
94. J. Booth, "Foundation opens its doors to questions," *Forres Gazette*, 7th August 1992.
95. "Face-to-face at Findhorn," *Forres Gazette*, 12th August

- 1992.
96. See the letter of E. Stevenson under the title "A forum well worth continuing for Findhorn," *Forres Gazette*, 19th August 1992.
 97. See the letter of S. Paterson under the title "Scrutiny too testing," *Forres Gazette*, 26th August 1992.
 98. "Possible foundation for compromise," *Forres Gazette*, 19th August 1992.
 99. *Ibid.*
 100. J. Booth, "'Liaison Panel' Move Blasted," *Forres Gazette*, 2nd September 1992.
 101. "Row over Foundation's 'inappropriate' panel," *Forres Gazette*, 9th September 1992.
 102. J. Hancox, "Gardeners of spiritual kind still cultivating local anger," *Sunday Telegraph*, 15th November 1992.
 103. A. Walker, ed, *The Kingdom Within: A Guide to the Spiritual Work of the Findhorn Community* (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1994), p. 24 n. 1.
 104. "Bid to change image 'false,'" *Forres Gazette*, 26th May 1993.
 105. See R. Lowe and W. Shaw, *Travellers: Voices of the New Age Nomads* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993).
 106. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
 107. It has been stated that there are only two rules at the Findhorn Foundation: "no smoking in public places, and no illegal drugs." Nevertheless, we are informed that during the 1970's "three members were picked up by the police for smoking marijuana." Although they were said to have been "unceremoniously expelled" from the Foundation, "six months later, two of them applied for, and were granted, readmittance." See O. and C. Popenoe, *Seeds of Tomorrow: New Age Communities that Work* (San Francisco: Harper & Row), pp. 188-89. There are still strong rumours in circulation regarding continued drug use within the Findhorn Foundation, and one former member has recently claimed to possess a number of taped conversations obtained during the "drug parties" that he alleges to have attended along with senior Foundation staff members. For new evidence concerning the harmful effects of marijuana or cannabis (said by users to be a safe

"recreational" drug) see D. Copestake, *Cannabis and Mental Functions* (Banbury: privately published, 1995). In the foreword to the booklet, Professor Derek Bryce-Smith writes: "Cannabis, the drug of self-abuse with which David Copestake's book is concerned, is described by some apologists as a 'recreational drug'—for all the world as if smoking 'pot' is on par with playing tennis. This . . . constitute[s] a sort of hypocrisy—the ancient trick of presenting foul as fair, or at least harmless." Professor Bryce-Smith continues, "cannabis is part of a spectrum of drug misuse ranging from alcohol and tobacco at the tolerated end to 'hard' drugs such as heroin, cocaine, LSD, and the new 'designer drugs' created by rogue chemists. . . . All these drugs produce their various effects on behaviour, personality, and mentation mainly by perturbing the intricacies of brain chemistry in a way that few who abuse them have any conception." According to Copestake: "Scientific evidence shows the following adverse effects of cannabis on the human person: it retards learning; it adversely affects the reproductive system and production of sex hormones; it has the capacity to adversely affect every organ in the body and can affect individual cells; its constituents are stored in fat cells and the brain contains a high proportion of fat; it adversely affects lung functions; it interferes with psychomotor functions and heart functions; it contains 50–70% more carcinogenic compounds than a tobacco cigarette; it adversely affects memory; it decreases motivation; and cannabis interferes with the immune system" (*ibid.*, p. 1). Copies of the booklet may be obtained from David Copestake (a trained psychologist and member of the International Cannabis Research Society) at: 22 Meadow View, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 9SR, England.

108. Popenoe, *Seeds of Tomorrow*, p. 190.
109. *Findhorn Newsletter* (July 1982):11.
110. Popenoe, *Seeds of Tomorrow*, p. 191.
111. "Kirk group condemns New Age," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd April 1993.
112. *Ibid.*
113. J. Hancox, article cited, *Sunday Telegraph*, 15th Novem-

- ber 1992.
114. *Ibid.*
 115. *One Earth*, Issue No. 13, Spring 1994. This publication has been criticised in K. Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. One* (Cambridge: Philosophical Press, 1995), pp. 940–1.
 116. For information on the Emin Foundation, see W. Shaw, *Spying in Guru Land: Inside Britain's Cults* (London: Fourth Estate, 1994), pp. 19–70.
 117. M. Forster, "The Things We Do For Love," *One Earth*, Issue No. 13, Spring 1994, pp. 27–28.
 118. *One Earth*, Issue No 13, Spring 1994, p. 2.
 119. A. Forbes, "Call for charity inquiry on Findhorn group," *The Scotsman*, 16th November 1992.
 120. A. Forbes, "A New Age community facing the age-old problems of local tradition," *The Scotsman*, 17th November 1992.
 121. *Ibid.*
 122. "Findhorn community 30 years on," *The Courier and Advertiser* (Dundee), 17th November 1992.
 123. A. Forbes, article cited, *The Scotsman*, 17th November 1992.
 124. R. Boston, "If only the spirit could move them," *The Guardian*, 11th November 1992.
 125. This is a highly romanticised description found on the back cover of P. Hawken, *The Magic of Findhorn* (London: Fontana, ninth impression April 1990).
 126. I. McKerron, "New Age Quarrellers," *Scottish Daily Express*, 16th August 1993, p. 9.
 127. "Tenants up in arms over caravan park conditions," *Forres Gazette*, 8th November 1993.
 128. "Foundation policy brings cold comfort for mother," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd December 1993.
 129. *Ibid.*
 130. K. Shepherd, *Meaning in Anthropos: Anthropography as an Interdisciplinary Science of Culture* (Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1991), p. xxxv.
 131. See the letter of S. Castro under the title "Question of charitable foundation," *The Northern Scot*, 31st July 1992.
 132. *Ibid.*

133. See the letter of J. Greenaway under the title "Are locals being left out?" *The Northern Scot*, 24th July 1992.
134. "Councillor challenges claims of 'benefits,'" *Forres Gazette*, 22nd July 1992.
135. "Foundation defends its place in the community," *Forres Gazette*, 29th July 1992.
136. J. Greenaway, letter cited, *The Northern Scot*, 24th July 1992.
137. C. Gibsone, "Holotropic Breathing within the Findhorn Foundation," *One Earth*, Issue 1, Autumn 1990, p. 17.
138. See the letter of D. Mead under the title "Leave each to his own way," *The Northern Scot*, 14th August 1992.
139. See the letter of S. Castro under the title "Answers still awaited," *The Northern Scot*, 21st August 1992.
140. "Chance to air views on holistic health care," *The Northern Scot*, 7th August 1992.
141. *Ibid.*
142. See the letter of Dr. S. J. Darke under the title "Fears over centre proposal," *The Northern Scot*, 21st August 1992.
143. See the letter of Dr. R. J. Stewart *et al*, under the title "GPs urge all options be viewed," *Forres Gazette*, 16th September 1992.
144. "Holistic centre bows to public pressure," *Forres Gazette*, 30th September 1992.
145. E. Taylor, "Call to halt controversial breathing course rejected," *Forres Gazette*, 21st October 1992.
146. E. Taylor, article cited, *Forres Gazette*, 21st October 1992.
147. *The Esalen Catalog*, September 1992 – February 1993.
148. S. Grof, *Realms of Human Unconsciousness: Observations from LSD Research* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), pp. xvii–xviii.
149. N. Drury, *The Elements of Human Potential* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989), p. 41.
150. T. Roszak, *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 199.
151. Drury, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
152. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
153. S. Grof, *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* (New York: SUNY, 1988), p. 295.

154. *Ibid.*
155. For a detailed critique of the theories of Holotropic Breathwork™ see K. Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. One* (Cambridge: Philosophical Press, 1995), pp. 65–84, 945–951. For data on Esalen, see *ibid.*, pp. 61ff.
156. J. Perera, "The hazards of heavy breathing," *New Scientist*, (3rd Dec., 1988), pp. 46–48. See also the letter of S. Castro under the title "The medical perspective on hyper-ventilation," *The Therapist* (Worthing 1995) 3 (2): pp. 45–46.
157. N. Albery, *How to feel Reborn? – Varieties of Rebirthing Experience* (London: Regeneration Press, 1985), p. 93.
158. F. Cook, "£415 – To Learn Breathing," *Sunday Mail*, 29th November 1992.
159. *The Supervision of Charities in Scotland* (Scottish Charities Office, 1992).
160. E. Taylor, "Sessions draw last breath," *Forres Gazette*, 13th October 1993.
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Ibid.*
163. Leaflet: *The Breath Within The Breath*, 1992.
164. According to the British Medical Association, "in the UK and Eire, non-medically qualified practitioners of non-conventional medicine are free to practise, whatever their level of training," and "anyone can practise as a non-conventional practitioner irrespective of whether or not he has undergone any form of training, providing that he does not infringe the Medical Act 1983 . . ." See British Medical Association, *Complementary Medicine: New Approaches to Good Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 24. In more enlightened European countries (France, Belgium, and Italy for example) the same situation does not apply, and "the practice of non-conventional medicine by anyone who is not a registered medical practitioner is outlawed" (*ibid.*, p. 26).
165. A. Forbes, "New Age meditation course cancelled on medical advice," *The Scotsman*, 14th October 1993.
166. S. Grof, *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*, p. 209.
167. See the letter of Kate Thomas under the title "Turning the spotlight on a questionable therapy," *Forres Gazette*,

20th October 1993.

168. "Foundation steers clear of breathwork," *Forres Gazette*, 27th July 1994.
169. Advertisement: *Kindred Spirit*, Winter 1993 – Feb 1994, pp. 64, 67.
170. "Breathwork courses switched to capital," *Forres Gazette*, 15th March 1993, p. 3.
171. W. Bloom, *The Sacred Magician: a ceremonial diary* (Glastonbury: Gothic Image, 1992).
172. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
173. G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (repr. New York: Dorset Press, 1987), p. 186.
174. *The Sacred Magician*, p. 150. For some further comments, see Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. 1*, pp. 933ff.
175. *Alternatives Winter Programme 1994/5*, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London.
176. *Ibid.*
177. M. Cole, J. Graham, T. Highton and D. Lewis, *What Is The New Age?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990).
178. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 48, and quoting from a response from Donald Reeves to criticisms of his church's New Age programme, published by the magazine *Prophecy Today* in July 1989.
180. "Church snub for breath sessions," *Forres Gazette*, 29th March 1995, p. 5.
181. A. Walker, ed., *The Kingdom Within*, p. 138.
182. S. Castro, "New Age Therapy – higher consciousness or delusion?" *The Therapist* (Worthing 1995) 2 (4): p. 16.
183. J. Lawson and M. Scott, "Cult guru gets top NHS job," *Sunday Mail*, 2nd October 1994.
184. Letter from S. Castro to D. Skidmore, dated 6th September 1995.
185. Letter from D. Skidmore to S. Castro, dated 14th September 1995.
186. See *Alternatives Winter Programme 1994/5*, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London.
187. Letter from K. Thomas to E. Caddy, dated 2nd April 1992.
188. Letter sent on behalf of K. Thomas to J. Buhler-McAllister, dated 3rd June 1992.
189. Letter from K. Thomas to J. Buhler-McAllister, dated 19th

June 1992.

190. Information sheet: "Associates and Open Community programme at the Findhorn Foundation," 1993.
191. "Book escapes legal action – so far," *Forres Gazette*, 5th August 1992.
192. See *The Findhorn Foundation Guest Programme, April – October 1994*, p. 10.
193. Letter from K. Thomas to J. Buhler-McAllister, dated 23rd March 1994.
194. S. Stanfield, "Notes from the Gulf – Peace Camp, that is . . .," *One Earth*, Issue No. 3, Summer 1991, p. 12.
195. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
196. *Ibid.*
197. See letter by A. Rees, *One Earth*, Issue No. 4, Autumn 1991, p. 6.
198. See the letter of Dr. S. J. Darke under the title "Address the issues, please," *The Northern Scot*, 28th August 1992.
199. Letter from K. Thomas to S. Miles, dated 15th August 1993.
200. Information sheet: "Associates and Open Community programme at the Findhorn Foundation," 1993.
201. At the time in question, *Rainbow Bridge* was the only other available non-commercial publication produced both by and for the Findhorn Community. It was an official internal weekly newsletter containing cartoons, ads, memos, minutes, and letters. The content was frequently badly written, banal, and even childish. From a sociological perspective, much of the subject matter contained in the *Bridge* unintentionally provided more insight into the social reality of the Findhorn Community than the official Foundation propaganda. After the publication of *The Destiny Challenge*, a copyright was placed on all material appearing within *Rainbow Bridge*, and its circulation became restricted by the Foundation management.
202. Letter from S. Castro to G. Cutler, dated 9th December 1993.
203. Alex Walker has written: "It is early days yet, but POP [process-oriented psychology] appears ideally suited to our culture and may be with us for a long time." See A. Walker, ed., *The Kingdom Within*, p. 137.

204. Letter from G. Cutler to S. Castro, dated 21st January 1994.
205. Letter from K. Thomas to G. Cutler, dated 12th January 1994.
206. Letter from G. Cutler to S. Castro, dated 21st January 1994.
207. Letter from J. Buhler-McAllister to K. Thomas, dated 21st January 1994.
208. Letter from S. Castro to G. Cutler, dated 22nd January 1994.
209. Letter from G. Cutler to S. Castro, dated 14th February 1994.
210. See advertisement in *One Earth*, Issue No. 4, Summer 1994, p. 31.
211. For an introduction to the theories of process-oriented psychology, see A. Mindell, *The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992). Having taken full advantage of the Martial Arts vogue, Mindell has recently contributed to the current New Age craze for Neo-Shamanism, and advocates the questionable "anthropological" writings of Carlos Castaneda. See A. Mindell, *The Shaman's Body: A New Shamanism for Transforming Health, Relationships, and Community* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993). For an academic appraisal of the popular novels written by Carlos Castaneda, see R. De Mille, ed., *The Don Juan Papers: Further Castaneda Controversies* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990).
212. See the letter of S. Castro under the title "Findhorn Foundation hypocrisy," *Forres Gazette*, 29th June 1994.
213. B. van der Lee, "WorldWork: Resolving Conflict and Creating Community," *One Earth*, Issue No. 18, Summer 1995, p. 39.
214. E. Taylor, "Foundation 'ban' shocks author," *Forres Gazette*, 23rd February 1994.
215. *Ibid.*
216. See the letter of Dr. S. J. Darke under the title "Trustees' integrity questioned," *The Northern Scot*, 2nd September 1992.

217. Letter from J. Buhler McAllister to K. Thomas, dated 21st January 1994.
218. *Ibid.*
219. *Ibid.* The "attunement" referred to in Judy Buhler-McAllister's letter is actually a rather dubious method of meditative reflection used among the Findhorn Foundation management for decision-making. The decisions arrived at by that method are believed by the Foundation to be divinely inspired, unquestionable, and beyond reproach.
220. K. Tyler, "Bridging the God Gap: Consciously Stepping into our Divine Nature," *One Earth*, Issue No. 11, Autumn 1993, p. 23.
221. Letter from Kate Thomas to Thierry Bogliolo, dated 25th February 1993.
222. E. Taylor, "Former member refused hearing by Foundation," *Forres Gazette*, 25th May 1994.
223. *Ibid.*
224. "Foundation in 'file' probe," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd June 1994.
225. *Ibid.*
226. Letter from C. Bischoff to G. Whibley, dated 16th September 1994.
227. See the letter of S. Castro under the title "Direct challenge to the Foundation," *Forres Gazette*, 20th July 1994.
228. See the letter signed Anonymous under the title "Time for Foundation critic to go elsewhere," *Forres Gazette*, 3rd August 1994.
229. *Ibid.*
230. See the letter of K. Thomas under the title "Distorted facts make surprising reading," *Forres Gazette*, 10th August 1994.
231. *Ibid.*
232. Letter from Liddle & Co (Solicitors) to J. Buhler-McAllister, dated 14th July 1994.
233. E. Taylor, "Membership shock at Foundation: Legal statement says New Age centre has no members," *Forres Gazette*, 17th August 1994.
234. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No.16, Winter 1994/5, p. 28.

235. I. McKerron, "Probe the 'Mafia' cult," *Scottish Daily Express*, 19th January 1995. See pp. 1, 12-13.
236. See the letter of H. Whiteson under the title "'Personal issues' deserve an airing in public," *Forres Gazette*, 21st September 1994. This letter was not published by the *Gazette* until five weeks after it was received.
237. See the letter signed Anonymous under the title "Time for Foundation critic to go elsewhere," *Forres Gazette*, 3rd August 1994. See also note 228 above.
238. H. Whiteson, letter cited, *Forres Gazette*, 21st September 1994.
239. It was later reported by the *Forres Gazette* that Loren Stewart had "described the interview as emotional but civilised. . . ." and "insisted that Mr. Whiteson had been given fair warning prior to the interview that an association with the case put forward by Miss Thomas could bar him from entry." (Whiteson had, therefore, already been discriminated against as a consequence of his support for Thomas before the interview took place). See the article "Support offered for 'conspiracy' theory," *Forres Gazette*, 26th October 1994.
240. Letter from H. Whiteson to L. Stewart, dated 24th October 1994.
241. Letter from H. Whiteson to R. Mark-Coates, dated 25th October 1994.
242. Letter from R. Mark-Coates to H. Whiteson, dated 4th November 1994.
243. G. Childs, *Steiner Education in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1991), pp. 18-19.
244. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
245. Statement from J. Rathbone to the Scottish Charities Office on the matter of Kate Thomas, dated 20th June 1994.
246. *Ibid.*
247. Letter from J. Rathbone to the Findhorn Foundation's Accommodation Secretary, dated 4th July 1994.
248. Letter from E. Droege to J. Rathbone, dated 12th July 1994.
249. Letter from L. Stewart to J. Rathbone, dated 2nd September 1994.

250. Letter from J. Rathbone to L. Stewart, dated 3rd September 1994.
251. Undated letter from M. Wik to J. Rathbone, received 5th September 1994.
252. Letter from J. Rathbone to A. Liddle & Co (Solicitors), dated 5th September 1994.
253. Letter from M. Wik to J. Rathbone, dated 21st September 1994.
254. Letter from J. Rathbone to M. Wik, dated 23rd September 1994.
255. Letter from J. Rathbone to L. Stewart, dated 24th September 1994.
256. Letter from M. Wik to J. Rathbone, dated 3rd October 1994.
257. *Ibid.*
258. M. Wik, *Rainbow Bridge*, 17th May 1990, p. 14.
259. Letter from J. Rathbone to the Scottish Charities Office, dated 8th October 1994.
260. *Ibid.*
261. Letter from J. Buhler-McAllister to J. Rathbone, dated 7th October 1994.
262. Letter from J. Rathbone to M. Wik, dated 8th October 1994.
263. Letter from M. Wik to J. Rathbone, dated 12th October 1994.
264. Letter from J. Rathbone to the Scottish Charities Office, dated 24th October 1994.
265. "Support offered for 'conspiracy' theory," *Forres Gazette*, 26th October 1994.
266. *Ibid.*
267. Letter from A. Kinnegen to J. Rathbone, dated 26th October 1994.
268. Statement by J. Woods, dated 9th January 1995.
269. E. Morrison, "Teacher takes legal move over job loss," *Forres Gazette*, 1st February 1995.
270. The other Trustees of the Findhorn Foundation are: Michael Shaw, president of Living Technologies Inc.; Judy Buhler McAllister, Director of the Findhorn Foundation; Sabrina Dearborn, a director of Alternatives, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London; Francois Duquesne, Director

of Operations and IT for Apple Computers (UK); Mary Inglis, resident member of the Findhorn Foundation; Edward Posey, Trustee of the Gaia Foundation; Nicholas Rose, founder of Greensleeves Books; Alan Watson, founder and Director of Trees for Life. Jill Rathbone later wrote to all the Foundation Trustees requesting that they investigate her complaints about the Foundation's management. All the Trustees in question declined to reply to her letters.

271. Letter from J. Rathbone to Lady D. Whitmore, dated 1st February 1995.
272. Letter from Lady D. Whitmore to J. Rathbone, dated 3rd February 1995.
273. D. Whitmore, "Pitfalls and Promises: Spiritual and Therapeutic Paths," *One Earth*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, Summer 1989, p. 10.
274. Letter from C. Clouder to J. Rathbone, dated 21st February 1995. This document has already been cited in Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. One*, p. 943.
275. This statement comes from the brochure *Minton Trust: A Retreat and Conference Centre*.
276. J. Meynell, "Minton Trust," *Rainbow Bridge*, 1st October 1993, p. 11.
277. Minton Trust brochure.
278. Letter from J. Rathbone to J. Meynell, dated 4th April 1995.
279. Letter from J. Rathbone to M. Ewing, MP, dated 30th April 1995.
280. Letter from T. Austin of the Press Complaints Commission to J. Rathbone, dated 11th April 1995.
281. Letter from J. Rathbone to M. Ewing, MP, dated 14th April 1995.
282. For information on Rajneesh and the Rajneeshi community, see L. F. Carter, *Charisma and Control in Rajneeshpuram* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also W. E. Mann, *The Quest for Total Bliss: A psycho-sociological perspective on the Rajneesh Movement* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press Inc., 1991). See also S. B. Franklin, *The Promise of Paradise: A Woman's Intimate Story of the Perils of Life with Rajneesh* (New York: Station

- Hill Press, 1992).
283. Statement from J. Rathbone to the Scottish Charities Office, dated 15th June 1995.
 284. Letter from Liddle & Co to Mackenzie & Grant (Solicitors), dated 18th May 1995.
 285. "School settles dispute with teacher," *Forres Gazette*, 21st July 1995.
 286. See the letter of K. Thomas under the title "Law makes no provision for Foundation outcast," *Forres Gazette*, 5th July 1995.
 287. *Findhorn College of International Education 1995/1996 Course Catalog* (The Park, Findhorn: Findhorn College, 1995), p. 3.
 288. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No. 19, Autumn 1995, p. 30.
 289. See advertisement in *One Earth*, Issue No. 14, Summer 1995, p. 25.
 290. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No. 13, Spring 1994, p. 25.
 291. *Findhorn College of International Education* catalog, p. 3.
 292. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No.17, Spring 1995.
 293. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No. 19, Autumn 1995, p. 30.
 294. *Ibid.*
 295. *Findhorn College of International Education* catalog, p. 18.
 296. *Ibid.*
 297. *Ibid.*, p. 3. The Global Village Studies Programme of the Findhorn College of International Education is to be hosted by both Minton House and Newbold House. Both establishments were involved in the promotion of Holotropic Breathwork™.
 298. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
 299. C. Riddell, *The Findhorn Community*, p. 210.
 300. W. E. Mann and E. Hoffman, *Wilhelm Reich: The Man Who Dreamed of Tomorrow* (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1990), p. 62.
 301. *Findhorn College of International Education* catalog, p. 21.
 302. The other publicised members of the Faculty are: Andrew Arthur, J.D., Jonathan Peter Caddy, B.Sc., M.E., Cornelia

- Fellner, Medical Doctor, John L. Talbott, B.Sc., Sharon Took-Zozaya, M.F.A., M.S., Peter Vallance, B.A., Alex Walker, M. Phil., Alan Watson, B.A., and Courtenay Young, B.Sc.
303. Letter from P. Caddy to K. Thomas, dated 5th March 1993.
 304. A. Marland, "Obituary: Peter Caddy," *The Scotsman*, 22nd February 1994.
 305. See the letter of K. Thomas under the title "Lack of democracy misgivings shared," *Forres Gazette*, 6th July 1994.
 306. "Foundation mounts major plea for funds," *Forres Gazette*, 8th June 1994.
 307. See the letter of R. Lyell Munro under the title "In hot water over place name," *Forres Gazette*, 22nd June 1994.
 308. R. Doudna, "Journal of Community Living," *One Earth*, Issue No. 16, Winter 1994/5, p. 28.
 309. *Ibid.*
 310. *Findhorn College of International Education* catalog, p. 14.
 311. A. Walker, ed., *The Kingdom Within*, p. 20.
 312. E. Morrison, "Village 'take-over' row relief," *Forres Gazette*, 14th September 1994.
 313. *The Kingdom Within*, pp. 20-21.
 314. P. Blackstock, "Lamenting the Cars," *One Earth*, Issue No. 18, Summer 1995, p. 29.
 315. *Ibid.*
 316. *Ibid.*
 317. K. Shepherd, *The Resurrection of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1989), p. 71.
 318. K. Shepherd, *Meaning in Anthropos: Anthropography as an Interdisciplinary Science of Culture* (Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1991), p. v. Some analysts have been fascinated by Shepherd's anthropographic philosophy. He states: "Anthropography is neither 'Establishment' and nor 'New Age.' I repudiate the latter entirely, owing to the wrong course it has taken. Unlike the 'New Age,' anthropography attempts a scientific worldview, and is firmly opposed to all Reichian and neo-Reichian emphases" (*ibid.*, p. vi).
 319. E. Morrison, "Watchdog questions aid to Foundation sewage plan," *Forres Gazette*, 19th July 1995. See also

- "Euro-cash for 'mystics,'" *Scottish Daily Mail*, 30th August 1995; "New Age village in £80,000 grant row," *Scottish Daily Express*, 30th August 1995.
320. E. Morrison, article cited, *Forres Gazette*, 19th July 1995.
 321. See the letter of Sir M. Joughin under the title "Grant aid questions 'sustainable' objective," *Forres Gazette*, 23rd August 1995.
 322. "Royal refusal for ecology conference," *Forres Gazette*, 5th July 1995.
 323. The name of H.R.H The Prince of Wales as an "invited speaker" also appeared in an advertisement for the FCIE on the back cover of *One Earth*, Issue No. 19, Autumn 1995, published two months after the above cited *Forres Gazette* article (see note 322).
 324. Letter from Commander Richard Aylard R.N. (Private Secretary to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales) to Jill Rathbone, dated 14th August 1995.
 325. K. Shepherd, *Minds and Sociocultures Vol. One* (Cambridge: Philosophical Press, 1995), p. 928. A major critique of the Foundation is included in Appendix 4 of this lengthy work. This extends from the same writer's earlier observations in what he has called his "deliberately mild form of critique" (*ibid.*). Shepherd wrote: "Current 'New Age' organizations like Esalen and the Findhorn Foundation constitute a cul-de-sac for progressive thinkers, and neglect spiritual and other priorities, instead promoting psychotherapies which do not clarify or further educational requirements. The narcissism of the 'New Age' movement(s) is rightly notorious amongst sociologists and others. Perhaps it is most accurate to state that 'New Age' elites (and lunatic fringe) mislead a majority who have not developed their critical faculties. Neo-Reichian and related psychotherapies masquerade under the auspices of mysticism and conveniently advocate non-criticism of flaws in the projected 'counterculture.'" (*The Resurrection of Philosophy*, Cambridge 1989, p. 88).

Appendix: Neglected Documents

In early November 1995 a man walked into Jill Rathbone's shop in Forres to view her stock. In the course of the ensuing conversation, he mentioned that he was an "Independent member" of the Findhorn Foundation, and had furthermore been connected with the Moray Steiner School at the time of her dismissal. He was therefore aware of her situation. Rathbone asked him if he knew the actual reason for her arbitrary ejection from the School, and he replied quite openly: "Yes, it was because you were a friend of Kate Thomas."

Rathbone duly asked, "But what has Kate Thomas done to merit such treatment of her friends?" The man said he did not know.

This man was Tony Brown. He had never met Kate Thomas, but was prepared to accept the Managerial ruling about her without question. Thomas had been stigmatised so effectively that the defamation of her character was now taken as "fact" in the minds of the Findhorn Foundation and affiliated organisations.

Brown appears in the listed Faculty of the Findhorn Foundation in the current 1995-1996 guest brochure, and will co-focalise a week long "workshop" next April (1996) on the subject: "Journey to the Heartlands," listed at £310-£410 per person (and for which "workshop" a generous fee is doubtless provided for the focalisers). According to the brochure, Brown's "passion lies in the areas of clairvoyance, psychology, and human consciousness" (p. 27), areas observed and researched over many years by author Kate Thomas,

whose non-commercial course incorporating these subjects was proffered entirely free of charge to the Foundation, and refused.

In September 1991, it was Brown who, apparently with deep concern, had waited one evening with Dr. Darke in the foyer of Cluny Hill College for the return of Gemma Whibley from her visit to Eileen Caddy. He had known of Whibley's earlier confrontation with Eric Franciscus that same evening, and had witnessed her extreme distress and state of near-collapse when removed from the College by Dr. Darke. His subsequent lack of concern with the truth of the matter relating to Whibley, with whom he was friendly when they worked together in the Foundation's maintenance department (of which he was focaliser at the time), seems therefore rather at variance with his advertised ideals. According to Whibley, when she approached Brown in 1994 at the time she attempted to arrange an impartial hearing, he appeared willing to assist her, but then suddenly changed his attitude after a conversation with Franciscus, and completely withdrew his support. Brown has since advertised himself in *Forres* as a "spiritual counsellor."

Because the issue of Kate Thomas has been so misrepresented and excised in Foundation policies of repression, the following extracts from letters of the stigmatised person might prove of interest to a more impartial readership.

There were several interchanges by letter between Judy Buhler-McAllister and Kate Thomas on the matter of the sudden expulsion of the latter from Open Community membership. Buhler-McAllister stated on March 24th 1994 that she had reached her decision "as a result of accumulated history," here referring to the "history" of Kate Thomas within the Findhorn Foundation. Yet this history had been the ignored subject of a letter dated 31st July 1993 mentioned on page 113 of the present book, which was sent by Thomas to Jill Brierley, Head of Human Relations Department, in relation to the former's request for Associate

membership. Brierley had asserted by telephone that this "history," and the content of the chapter on the Findhorn Foundation in *The Destiny Challenge*, were the direct barriers to that category of membership—permitting as it did at that time, voluntary work within various departments of the Foundation and an active participation in the life of the community. She was clearly most unwilling to allow Thomas to make a further application for Associate membership.

In her letter to Brierley, Thomas queried:

"What is my history? And why should it cause such offence that an entire community opposes my inclusion as an Associate member?"

She then listed the significations of her former period of Associateship in 1989–1990:

"(a) Two letters written to *Rainbow Bridge* in the spring of 1990 expressing my concern about Holotropic Breathwork Therapy. *Rainbow Bridge* was an Open Forum [supposedly egalitarian] for discussion. Others expressed an equal concern, and some are still doing so, including the Scottish Charities Office.

"(b) My resignation of Associate membership on November 2nd 1990 through the continuous hostility of certain staff members invoked by my opposition to the Breathwork, an hostility which I did not feel inclined to cope with in addition to the stress of my daughter's illness and death from leukaemia several weeks earlier (September 17th 1990), which left me with the problem of making provision for the care of her two distraught children.

"(c) My reapplication for Associate membership in June 1991, which unfortunately coincided with the friction arising between Gemma Whibley and Eric Franciscus on the subject of myself, my work, my psychology, and my integrity.

"(d) The publication of my autobiography in June 1992 which included the history of my contact with the Foundation.

"If this lastmentioned point (the publication of my autobiography) constitutes the current dilemma, then it obviously

devolves upon comments made by me in *The Destiny Challenge* on the following, or similar, issues:

"(1) **Holotropic Breathwork™**—using information given by Grof himself in his books (I have read all of them), or on tape. [The suspension of H.B. in 1993 as a result of the intervention of the Scottish Charities Office, on the grounds of medical advice, has surely validated the objection].

"(2) **The Game of Transformation**—which I stated was not 'based on esoteric principles' as some like to proclaim; and that a board game, of its very nature, could not assist towards the promotion of genuine spiritual growth.

"(3) **Therapy**—my view that therapy cannot produce spiritual growth and should not be 'sold' as such; that it has its place in healing the damaged individual but this should not be confused with soul states, nor conducted at the same time as other undertakings. David Spangler stated this latter very explicitly at his last and most recent talk on the future of the Findhorn Foundation—he suggested a Department of Therapy, and that all therapeutic processes should be contained in that department and not overflow throughout the entire educational output and everyday life of the community, as they do now.

"(4) **Reichian Therapy**—I protested against the over-emphasis on sexual experience and the permissive attitudes which seem at variance to a supposedly spiritually oriented community. This over-stress on sexual matters is made worse in my view by incorrectly linking it with inner development, a connection which is taught as a statement of fact by many therapists. Reich believed in encouraging sexual activity in children from a very early age (as did Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), and perhaps this is why a Reichian therapist within the Foundation was accused not so long ago of sexually abusing a child. To them there is no such thing as sexual abuse. I'm sure you know that Rajneesh, for instance (who vigorously sponsored Reichian therapy), advocated that children should watch their parents having sexual intercourse and should also experiment for themselves. This cost him

many devotees who could stomach everything but that, and who likewise resisted the many compulsory abortions. This is the prime reason I protested against the Foundation's consistent promotion of Rajneesh's books and cassettes, which are sold within the Foundation. The above assertions have been fully authenticated by lapsed 'close' disciples still stunned by what they themselves were induced to do in the name of spiritual development. [Rajneesh was arrested, fined, and banished from the U.S.A. after a scandal involving charges of terrorism]. One would have thought the mothers within the Findhorn Foundation would have joined me in protest against travesties of traditional teachings which, along with other dubious activities, gain false credence by their inclusion in what is on offer under Findhorn Foundation auspices. I also (in *The Destiny Challenge*) opposed 'casual sex' and promiscuity, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. A logical and non-esoteric reason for this is the high risk of AIDS. Some of your young people will fall by the wayside if there continue to be no restraints.

"Assuming the foregoing, and further comments, are the barrier to my Associate membership, perhaps it is time that those who oppose my inclusion should acknowledge this openly and make plain their reasons for refusing to discuss those comments, point by point, in the overall interests of the community. For I am not alone in my viewpoint, only in the publication of it. Many individuals within the Foundation are afraid of losing their homes, their friends, and their livelihoods, if they speak out and antagonise certain 'authorities' well entrenched within the security of the 'establishment.' I know this is true, and many people (some of whom have since quietly disappeared from the Foundation) have acknowledged it in my presence.

"The inference in all our conversations is that I am somehow 'on trial,' and this in turn implies that I have committed some major offence which must be expiated or lived down. This is simply not true, and it is high time the community gave honest consideration to what actually *did*

occur, and who actually was on the wrong end of it and excluded, and why that exclusion *is still operative* despite all my efforts at reconciliation. . . . If this is the way I am to be 'fobbed off' and continually treated, then I do not wish to be part of the Open Community which feels so unjustly hostile towards me. For you to say that time will resolve this is unrealistic. If those who so strongly oppose my inclusion neither speak to me nor are willing to discuss the existent situation, how can it ever change?

"Under the above circumstances, unless the community is willing to at last confront what is wrong, I must ask for the return of my £50 fee, given in the belief that the 'fresh start' was genuine on both sides. Also the £200 lodged with Accommodations for the Foundation course booked for August 28th, as I no longer feel happy about entering Cluny Hill College after speaking with Sue Miles. People may smile and say hello, but the underlying attitudes have not changed, as has just been proven. It would not have hurt anyone to let me work the odd shift there, etc.

"Change can only be brought about by the focalisers of the Foundation. In ensuring that I have no credence, and no voice, you are hardly paving the way for reconciliation."

The response to this letter was an arrangement by telephone for the meeting that took place in Eileen Caddy's home in the second week of August 1993. That meeting was an abortive event which demonstrated the Foundation psychology of evasion. Afterwards Kate Thomas sent a letter, dated August 15th, to Sue Miles (focaliser of Cluny Hill College), from which comes the reference on page 113 above. This letter also requested the clearance of her name from:

"... the continuous stigmatisation which is perpetuated within the Findhorn Foundation, some of which was openly reasserted, complete with errors, by Eileen Caddy on Thursday [at the meeting in her home]. If there is so much opposition, ill-will, and misconception concerning my recent admission into the Open Community (as was stated), then I require this to be articulated and adjudicated—and to be

given a democratic and egalitarian opportunity to defend myself rather than submit to the insidious undermining that is operative now.

"I therefore request that a consensus opinion should be sought of the entire community within this coming fortnight regarding my readmission and proposed Associate membership. I also require a specific reason for the unfriendly and unsubstantiated condemnatory attitudes displayed by Eileen Caddy and Jill Brierley on Thursday afternoon last, which, according to those present, accurately reflect the attitudes of the Foundation as a whole, which I would question. These attitudes, I must emphasise, were in active expression amongst certain senior staff prior to the publication of my book in June 1992, and thus do not derive from this latter period as some people find it convenient to suggest. The chapter which refers to my contact with the Findhorn Foundation, and which has caused such offence, was first and foremost a factual record of these attitudes and the situations surrounding them, as those most opposed to me appear to have overlooked.

"In view of the formidable personal stress engendered by this situation, I anticipate, as a token of concern for the continued appalling and denigratory discrimination against a fellow human being, a fully explanatory letter from those in charge by August 30th."

Yet there was no explanatory letter, and indeed, no letter of any kind, not from Jill Brierley or anyone else in the Foundation. There was no consensus opinion sought from the community. It was impossible to elicit any explanation of the "unsubstantiated condemnatory attitudes" specified. Kate Thomas informed me about what had happened at the meeting in Eileen Caddy's home. Amongst other things, Caddy had asserted that she was convinced from her earliest interview with Thomas (March 1988) that the latter had come to the Foundation with the wrong aims and the wrong motivation, desiring to "teach" (which is how the critical observations of Thomas were interpreted) rather than to learn

from those who had already absorbed what the Foundation had to give. This assertion of Eileen Caddy directly contradicts her letter to Kate Thomas of 2nd April 1988, where she writes: "I am so glad that you will be coming back. Please do make contact with me when you do. . . . Wishing you every blessing in all the wonderful work that you are doing." See also chapter 4, p. 29 above, which quotes from the same letter and includes the statement: "I so enjoyed our time together. . . ."

According to Eileen Caddy, "learning" was the achievement in process at the Foundation. That belief is impossible to credit by those who have closely observed events. Caddy made it clear that she regarded the Foundation as a "school," with the principal teacher being none other than God (or the Universe). God delegated to the favoured community whatever was necessary through the "attunements" of Foundation focalisers. God's will was thus reflected in events arising from the Foundation's "educational" programmes and also in other occurrences within the Foundation. In real life, what actually happens as a result of such beliefs is that both staff and non-staff members tend to esteem and elevate their own abilities, often to a rash degree. So many of them constantly try to teach those around them (both Foundation members and visitors), and act as unquestioned teachers of therapy and spirituality in the Foundation's official programme of commercial workshops and courses, for which they charge very high fees.

Eileen Caddy's attitude of elitism was extremely censorious of Kate Thomas at this private and carefully screened meeting in the former's abode. Caddy was supported unquestioningly by Jill Brierley, despite the fact that Brierley had not been involved in any of the issues raised. These two women held the view that the position of Thomas was rendered totally invalid by the divinely appointed role of the Foundation. She had no rights, and should not expect any. Caddy's role as a minister of the divine will was very much in evidence.

Another of those present at the meeting was Sue Miles, a relative newcomer to the Foundation. According to the report of Thomas, after the meeting Miles expressed sympathy for the victim in a private conversation with her. She said to Thomas that she would have been just as upset herself if such high-handed remarks had been made to her. Miles also commented on the incongruous level of aggression directed at Thomas, whom she felt had behaved with great forbearance throughout the tirade of accusations. The consequence was that Miles invited her several days later to visit her privately at Cluny Hill College, and an arrangement was made for August 20th. Yet it transpired that Loren Stewart was present on that occasion, having requested this at the very last minute, or so Thomas was told. He said he was there in an official capacity to inform her that her request for Associate membership had once more been refused. Only one person out of the eight present at the management meeting had voted for her inclusion, the rest had "attuned" to No. Thomas asked if he was that person, and Stewart replied, "No, Sue Miles." During the ensuing conversation, he gave no explanation of the condemnatory attitudes, and nor did he mention her crucial letters of 31st July and 15th August. Instead, Stewart made clear to Thomas that he was "not big enough" (these are said to have been his actual words) to forgive her for including his name in her book in a critical context. Thomas responded that in her view his real problem lay not in forgiving her but in confronting *himself*—i.e., in admitting to himself that he could behave as badly as he did even while claiming an affinity with the highest ideals. It was quite obvious that Stewart was determined to block any possible loophole for Thomas, and that he wanted to divert the attention of Sue Miles from the situation of victimisation. Miles was never the same again, and within days of this awkward meeting, she adopted an aloof attitude towards Thomas that was typical of staff policy. Her friendship had ended without any explanation. Soon afterwards, Miles became a member of the Foundation

Faculty and a course tutor in her own right. She too had "learned" to teach others, the major Foundation speciality.

There was no further meeting between Thomas and any Foundation staff member until the occasion when she spoke to the Head of Administration, Patrick Nash, on January 5th 1994, on the subject of Gemma Whibley (see p. 116).

This deferred interchange came about at the suggestion of Jill Brierley. Thomas had written to Brierley on October 31st, 1993, expressing concern about the recently publicised promotion of Holotropic Breathwork™ by David Mead and other Foundation members, despite the recommendations of the Scottish Charities Office, and despite the personal assurance she had received from Loren Stewart that the Breathwork had been suspended indefinitely. Stewart had also stated of the Breathwork that the Foundation "had no further interest in promoting it." The official, brief, and rather ambiguous reply (dated November 18th, 1993) had been signed by Brierley but was in fact dictated by Patrick Nash, as Brierley confessed when Thomas queried the content in late December. Any questions therefore, said Brierley, should be addressed to Nash, and she suggested that Thomas should "drop in" to his office and ask Nash to clarify what had been written. Yet although virtually any Findhorn Community member could "drop in" to speak with Nash if he was unengaged, Thomas apparently could not, and was required to book an interview, which did not take place for a further week.

Thomas and Nash had never spoken together previously. Nash was pleasant enough (according to Thomas) but extremely evasive. He quite plainly did not wish to give time to her on the matter of the Foundation's ongoing association with Holotropic Breathwork™ and despatched her speedily without any detailed conversation. As she left his office, she paused in the doorway to ask if anything had ever been done about Gemma Whibley, as Thomas understood there had been an enquiry. Nash's confirmatory reply and his comment that the matter was now closed, and Judy Buhler-McAllister's

reaction to such a question being asked, were undoubtedly the precipitating causes that led to the expulsion of Kate Thomas from Open Community membership two weeks later, only five days from the long-arranged interview pressed for by Thomas that she had hoped would reinstate her as an Associate member. Loren Stewart, who appeared to have sole jurisdiction on the matter of Thomas, had reluctantly agreed to making the original appointment, which was for October 29th, within several weeks of his "official" meeting with her on August 20th. He perhaps complied because Associate membership was a fully described option jointly offered on all Open Community application forms to any who cared to apply for it, as Thomas had pointed out. This earlier interview, scheduled to be conducted by Loren Stewart and Jill Brierley, was cancelled as Thomas was unavoidably detained in Cambridge at the time.

Thomas recounted that a week prior to the interview with Patrick Nash in his office, she received an unexpected accolade. She had been absent from the Foundation precincts for a period of eight weeks, having spent three weeks in Cambridge and a further five recovering from Beijing flu and its aftermath. Upon entering the Community Centre at the Park for a meal at the end of December (1993), she was greeted loudly and joyfully by Magda Thompson, a woman who had shown consistent friendliness towards Kate Thomas since they first met several months previously, and who now stood with several other Foundation members in the entrance hall. Thompson asked Thomas where she had been—she had been looking out for her "for weeks"—a friend of Thompson, who lived locally, had just read *The Destiny Challenge* and was "over the moon" about it and wished to meet the author. Thompson now wished to read the book for herself, as did another of her friends. Thompson made clear in the crowded foyer that the book by Thomas was most definitely worth reading. Patrick Nash happened to pass through at that moment, and also one or two other senior staff members who were not at all partial to the enthusiasm visibly displayed

by Thompson. Whether this minor episode had any influence over the subsequent events related above is not for me to say. The reader must make his or her own deductions.

Following her expulsion, Thomas lost all contact with the very few friends she had made within the Findhorn Foundation. Nobody sought her out after her expulsion, and nobody, as far as is known, ever said a word in her defence. Magda Thompson was later found listed among the course focalisers in the *Findhorn Foundation Guest Programme, April – October 1994*, and obviously had much to lose if she stood out of line.

Kate Thomas found herself once again an invisible presence on the streets of Forres. Foundation members acted as if they did not see her, or else averted their heads when in her vicinity. A few awkwardly acknowledged her whilst professing ignorance of why she had been excluded. A former benign acquaintance went out of his way to be downright rude to her, and a previously friendly woman, also influenced by the hostile propaganda spread about by Foundation staff members, was quite viciously abusive by telephone, and to such an extent indeed that conscience compelled the offender to write an apology. She nevertheless later publicly humiliated Kate Thomas in Forres High Street, still influenced by the story that the stigmatised person was an uncooperative troublemaker.

I conclude with a letter sent by Thomas to the Scottish Charities Office on June 9th 1994, and addressed to Anne Swarbrick, the Senior Legal Adviser:

"When we last spoke you agreed to again look into the matter of my sudden expulsion from Open Community membership of the Findhorn Foundation without prior warning or discussion . . . Since then a circular letter has been sent by Stephen Castro to eight of the nine Findhorn Foundation Trustees outlining what has occurred and respectfully requesting that they please examine all the extensive correspondence relating to the issues concerning Gemma Whibley and myself, and to then consider the setting up of

a democratic Internal Enquiry . . . The circulars were addressed to Mary Inglis, Alan Watson, Edward Posey, Nicholas Rose, Michael Shaw, Francoise Duquesne, Sabrina Dearborn, and Lady Diana Whitmore. The ninth Trustee is, of course, Judy Buhler-McAllister. The circular was despatched on May 24th. As there were no replies, I yesterday contacted Nicholas Rose by telephone in view of my slight acquaintance with him in the past in a business capacity.

"It was immediately obvious that there was no hope of an enquiry or any intervention at all by the Trustees. Mr. Rose said it was not his role to become involved in such matters; these affairs were vested in Management, and he has talked with those concerned and is satisfied with the way I have been dealt with. When I asked if he had received and read the full documentation, he replied that he cannot get involved with reading a lot of correspondence, he had all the information that was necessary (I took notes throughout the conversation and am using his phraseology). He does *not* want to hear details, and said that I must discuss it with Management (which I cannot do, as not one of them will speak to me either face-to-face or by telephone), or with the Community (which is impossible, as I cannot call a meeting and may not enter Findhorn Foundation buildings). He refused to let me tell him what had actually happened, asserting that the problem was my own subjectivity, and ignoring all the documentation and the rights and wrongs or truth of the matter. He suggested I should 'meditate' upon it and accept Judy Buhler-McAllister's decision. I pointed out that I had been indicted by an entire community through Judy's misrepresentations, and was now in a worse position than any member of the public because people thought I had done something seriously wrong to merit expulsion and such total exclusion."

On June 23rd 1994, Mary Inglis, on behalf of her fellow Foundation Trustees, sent the following curt response to the present writer on the matter of my petition for an impartial internal enquiry:

"In reply, I need to inform you that the Director of the Foundation, Judy Buhler-McAllister, has the support of the Trustees in dealing with the matters you raise in your letter."

What this means is that the Trustees supported the repressive action of the Foundation Director in ignoring the relevant documentation and all that it implied. They did that in the name of a Charity. Non-democratic charity status deserves to be considered a very questionable identity.

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Hypocrisy and Dissent within the Findhorn Foundation

Towards a Sociology of a New Age Community

The Findhorn Foundation is a well known New Age community established in the Moray area of north-east Scotland since 1962. Classified as a New Religious Movement by sociologists, the Foundation claims to have created a "planetary village" involving various activities such as an ecological building programme, alternative therapy, and New Age businesses. It also claims to be a leader in raising consciousness and creating new social models for people to live and work together in deeply harmonious ways.

In this book the author has focused upon what constituted an unprecedented number of media reports and disclosures relating to the Findhorn Foundation that arose during the period of 1992-1995, to which has been added a substantial amount of first-hand material confirming allegations of cult-behaviour exhibited by staff members of the Foundation towards those regarded as dissenters.

This study provides a record of some significant incongruities evidenced by this charity-status organisation, which has described itself as "a community demonstrating a way of life in conscious co-operation with God."

Over the years a number of works have appeared which have sought to glamorise the history, work, beliefs, and practices of the Findhorn Foundation. This book, however, is the first to expose the hypocrisy displayed in the social behaviour of that New Age community.

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